













THE LIVES  
OF  
EARLY METHODIST PREACHERS.

CHIEFLY WRITTEN BY THEMSELVES.

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,

BY

THOMAS JACKSON.

THIRD EDITION, WITH ADDITIONAL LIVES.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

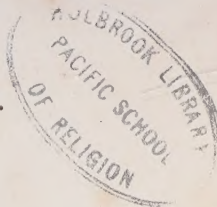
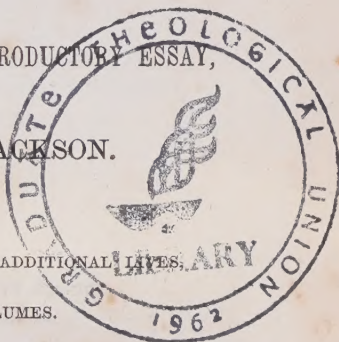
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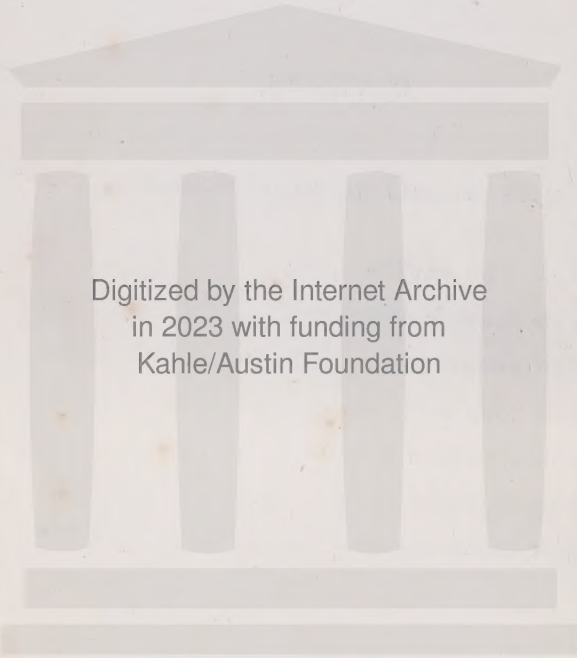
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THE LIFE  
OF  
MR. JOHN PAWSON.

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WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

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I WAS born in a very obscure village, near Leeds, in Yorkshire, November 12th, 1737. My parents lived in good repute, were members of the Established Church, and constantly attended public worship ; but were entire strangers to the power of godliness. They possessed, however, some degree of the fear of God, and, according to the light they had, trained up all their children in the instruction and discipline of the Lord. They taught us to say our prayers, and repeat the Church Catechism, obliged us constantly to go to church, and would not suffer us to run into open sin. My father maintained his authority in his own house, and his word gave law to his children. I heartily bless God for this, as I am sensible that by this means I was kept from running into many and various evils, which I was exposed to in my childhood. At that time, alas ! we had not the Gospel preached in Thorner ; and, dreadful as it may appear, I am quite of opinion there was not a single person, man or woman, in the

place, who had any saving knowledge of God. The tree is known by its fruit; and I say this from a thorough acquaintance with the life and conversation of everyone in the parish.

As I was my father's first-born son, he had an uncommon affection for me, and gave me as good an education as his circumstances would allow. As I was intended for the building business, all my time was taken up in learning what was proper to fit me for that employment, especially architecture. When I was about fifteen years of age, I was sent to Hull, to learn my business with a brother-in-law. I was then remarkably serious, loved retirement, and kept no company, but went to the church constantly, and met on Sunday evenings with a society of well-disposed people, in the vestry-room of the High Church. Whether these people were acquainted with the power of godliness, I know not, as I was then an entire stranger to everything of that kind myself; nor do I remember that any particular impressions, of a spiritual nature, were made upon my mind; only I thought, "This is the way to serve God, and get safe to heaven." Indeed, I judged myself to be a very good Christian, and had not a doubt but, die when I would, I should be everlastingly happy with God in His kingdom.

When I was about eighteen years old, I fell in company with some people who had much conversation respecting the Methodists, against whom I was exceedingly prejudiced, believing them to be an ignorant, foolish, and wicked people: therefore I had not the least desire to be acquainted with them; nor had I so much curiosity as to wish to hear any of them preach, or to read any of their writings. One present strongly insisted that the Methodists,



in general, were a very pious people ; and, as a proof of it, said his wife was one of them ; that she attended the church twice every Lord's day, and received the holy sacrament every Sunday ; and that, on this account, they never cooked anything for dinner on that sacred day. I thought, " Then she must be a good Christian indeed," as going constantly to church and sacrament included the whole of religion, as far as I knew. This gave me a more favourable opinion of the Methodists, and I felt a desire to hear some of them. Accordingly, one evening, when I supposed they had preaching, I went ; but when I came to the door of that poor obscure place in which they then preached in Hull, it occurred to my mind, that I had never been in a Dissenting meeting-house in my life ; that I was a stranger to their way of worship ; that I should not know when to kneel down, or when to stand up, and I should be ashamed. I therefore walked round the house, and returned home, and thought no more of the Methodists for several years. At this time the light of the Gospel was well-nigh extinguished in Hull. But what a glorious change hath the Lord wrought in that town since then ! How highly are the inhabitants favoured with the light of Divine truth ! They can hear the Gospel in two or three churches, in several Dissenting meeting-houses, and in three Methodist chapels. At that time, a Methodist was held in supreme contempt, as that name implied everything that was low, mean, and despicable in the opinion of the world. But, through the infinite mercy of God, they are now better known ; and very differently thought of by great numbers of people.

In the year 1756 I began to follow my business at

Harewood, near Leeds. Here I fell in with a company of exceeding wild, vain, and wicked young men; but the Lord mercifully preserved me from being led astray by them. I certainly was in extreme danger, as I was very intimate with one of very loose morals. We lodged together, and I had an uncommon attachment to him. He took every method he could think of to entice me into sin; but all his attempts were in vain. Outward iniquity appeared odious to me; and in the evening, when he was gone out, I generally sung a psalm, prayed to God, and, at a proper time, went quietly to bed. Still, however, I was as great a stranger to the nature of true religion as ever. I despised the Methodists, and seriously thought myself much wiser and better than any of them. At that time there was only one poor, aged woman in Harewood who was called a Methodist, and she died just at the time I was brought to the knowledge of the truth. On her death-bed she sent for one of her neighbours, and said, "This town will be visited with the Gospel: I shall not live to see it, but you will. God will raise up a certain young man, and he will begin to keep meetings near Hunter's Pond." This exactly came to pass soon after she died; and the woman she spoke to was one of the first who embraced the Gospel. I believe this poor but truly pious woman had long been praying, that the Lord would have mercy upon her neighbours, and send the Gospel among them; and He mercifully condescended to show her, on her death-bed, that her prayers should be answered. It was rather remarkable, that the first person that was awakened in that town had been a most profane and ungodly man, and a determined enemy to the Methodists. But when he was

brought to repentance, he opened his door, and I began a prayer-meeting at his house. He turned to God with his whole heart; and everyone saw the change: he discharged the debts he had contracted in the time of his rebellion against God, maintained his family comfortably, and joined the society. He began to think soon after this, "It costs me a penny a week at my class: this would be something towards sending one of my children to school. I will not be in the society; but I will attend the preaching, and will walk closely with God." Upon this, he left the society, and afterwards became quite melancholy; insomuch that he could not rest in his bed, but wandered about in the fields at nights. He strove to sing vain songs, in order to drive those gloomy thoughts from his mind, but he was not able; he grew worse and worse, till he had nearly lost the use of his reason. He then joined the society again, sought the Lord with his whole heart, and soon found Him a God gracious and merciful, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; and has since then been a steady follower of the Lord Jesus.

In the year 1758 a young woman lent my father two sermons, which had been preached at the Old Church in Leeds, by the Rev. Henry Crook, who was then curate of Hunslet chapel. These sermons were so exceedingly censured, and the minister so ridiculed, that he published them in self-defence. Here I may justly stand and admire the wisdom and goodness of God. It was in reading these very sermons, that my mind was enlightened respecting the way of salvation by faith in the Redeemer of mankind. The subject of one of these sermons was Isaiah xxix. 11: "And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed," &c.



In this he proved the necessity of Divine illumination, and that without it the Scriptures are a sealed book, both to the learned and unlearned. The other was on Jeremiah vi. 16: "Stand in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths," &c. In this sermon he proved from the Bible and the Common Prayer-book, as well as from the Articles of the Church, that salvation by faith is the good old way; and that besides it there is no other in which a lost sinner can find rest for his soul. Had he only attempted to prove his doctrine by the Scriptures, I should have thought he put his own sense upon them; but as he clearly showed that, in the daily service of the church, we prayed for these things, I plainly saw that I had been praying for what I did not believe, and was deeply humbled before the Lord under a sense of my past sin and folly.

In June this year, I went to a feast at Askwith, with no other design but to get an opportunity to hear the Methodists. It happened to be the yearly meeting of the Quakers that day; and I went and heard a woman speak for more than an hour, but could not understand her at all. This was the first time I ever was in a Dissenting meeting of any kind. I went the same evening to Otley, and heard Mr. James Oddie preach an excellent sermon from Acts xiii. 38: "Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins," &c. I was very much surprised to observe the serious and devout behaviour of the people, whom I had so much despised, and was highly delighted with the singing; but the discourse, delivered from the pulpit with such a heavenly solemnity, quite astonished me. I was permitted to stay the society-meeting, and was obliged to conclude

that if the people paid any regard to the excellent instructions given them, they must be patterns of piety and godliness. Here it was that the Lord fixed a resolution in my heart, to seek and to serve Him, which, through His infinite mercy and love, has continued to this day; and which, I doubt not, will abide with me for ever. I returned to my uncle's, at whose house I then resided, but did not acquaint any one of the family where I had been; but, in the course of our conversation, my uncle said, "I pray God these Methodists may never get the upper hand: if they do, we shall have dreadful work." One present replied, "Why, what do you think they will do?" "Do?" said he; "why, they will murder us all. Do they not damn all mankind but themselves? And if they will damn us, they will murder us too, you may be sure." So ignorant were many people in these days respecting the Methodists and their designs.

I returned home fully purposed to seek the salvation of God, little thinking that any who loved me would oppose me in pursuing my best interests. But herein I was greatly mistaken. My father and mother, and all my relations, being as great strangers to the Methodists, and as deeply prejudiced against them as I had been, were astonished beyond measure, and used every means in their power to divert my mind from the object I had in view. As I had never disobeyed my father at any time, he thought that he had nothing more to do but to use his authority, which he did with all speed, and expressly forbade me to hear the Methodists any more. But I was obliged to disobey; and how was he surprised to find his authority disregarded! It gave me inexpressible pain to displease my father; but the

salvation of my soul was at stake. My uncle was a single man, and in good circumstances. He had often promised what he would do for me : but he sent me word, that I should never be the better for anything he had, except I left this way ; and he made his resolution good some years afterwards, when he was called out of time into eternity.

I had but very few opportunities of hearing preaching ; nor had I anyone to converse with, or from whom I could obtain help, respecting the salvation of my soul. The few Methodists that were in the neighbourhood were so much afraid of my father, that they had not courage to say anything to me. My mind was not a little pained to see those that I so cordially loved in such distress on my account ; and more especially as I well knew that all the opposition and unkind treatment which I met with from them, proceeded from ignorance, and that their souls were in as great danger as I saw my own to be. But the words of our Lord sounded in my ears, " He who loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." Therefore I clearly saw that I must at all events pursue the one thing needful, let who would be offended with me.

I spent all the time I possibly could in reading the best books I could meet with ; and, through the merciful providence of God, I met with several of those published by Mr. John Bunyan ; and also Mr. Joseph Alleine's " Alarm to the Unconverted " fell into my hands. These I found profitable. By reading them my mind was much more enlightened, and my conscience more awakened. I soon received such a deep sense of my guilty and depraved state of mind, that my business became a burden to me, and my father really thought that I should lose my



reason, and be quite ruined. All his hopes concerning me were now blasted, and his designs frustrated; and, considering the violence of his natural temper, it is matter of astonishment to me, that he did not use me much worse than he did. For he had been at much expense in fitting me for the business for which he designed me; and, from the time I was awakened, I never used a mathematical instrument more, but laid aside all my books of architecture, and every endeavour to improve myself in gaining a more perfect knowledge of my business. I spent all the time I possibly could in reading divinity, in order to gain a more perfect acquaintance with the things of God. Indeed, I acted in all things as if I had the fullest assurance that the Lord designed me for the ministry; though, at the same time, I had not the most distant thought of any such thing. I now adore the wisdom of God in thus disposing my mind to search after Divine knowledge, and in leading me to devote myself wholly to Him; but do not recommend my example as to my business to all, as the Lord cannot have the same designs concerning everyone.

This was a time of great and sore trial. I saw with unspeakable sorrow how exceedingly distressed my dear parents were on my account; and yet, notwithstanding my sincere and tender affection for them, my conscience obliged me daily to increase their sorrow, not only in acting in direct opposition to their will as to myself, but in labouring with all my might to bring all the family into the same way. And, blessed be the name of the Lord, my labour was not in vain. My only brother was awakened, so likewise was my youngest sister's husband, and my eldest sister and her husband. These things, any

one may suppose, greatly alarmed my father, as he thought he saw all his family quite ruined; and he laid all the blame upon me, and looked upon me as the cause of all these misfortunes; so that he was almost willing to give me up, if he could only preserve the rest of his family: but the Lord had merciful designs concerning them.

My father had often threatened to disown and disinherit me, and had treated me with great severity; but he now tried a different method. He expressed the tenderest regard for me, and said, "You know these people are exceedingly despised. It will entirely ruin your character to go among them; and, as it is now a time of war, you may be pressed for a soldier, and then I shall be at a good deal of trouble and expense to get you released. You may purchase what books you please; and surely you may gain much more knowledge by reading, than by hearing those unlearned and ignorant lay-preachers." I found it hard work to resist the authority, and withstand the tender entreaties, of an aged and affectionate parent; but, although my heart was ready to bleed, I saw the necessity I was under to obey God, rather than man, even my own father. From this time he watched me so narrowly, that it was with great difficulty I could get to the preaching. One Sunday, in particular, I had fully intended to go, but his eye was upon me, and I had not resolution sufficient to break through. When the time was elapsed, I went into a solitary place, where I thought no one would find me, and there bitterly lamented my case before the Lord. My father soon found me, and asked me to take a walk with him into the fields, it being summer, in order to amuse and divert me; but, alas! my sorrow was too great to be

removed or relieved by anything of this sort, but was rather increased than otherwise. We returned in time to attend the service of the church ; and in the evening I read, as we generally did on a Sunday night, in the family. As I was very much profited by Alleine's "Alarm" myself, I read in that book this evening. He seemed to approve of what this blessed man of God said ; but I plainly perceived he did not understand him. I therefore, with all possible tenderness, ventured to speak a little on the necessity of experiencing these things in our own minds. This could not be endured : he was offended, and said, "Blessed be God, you are not to be my judge. If you were, I know you would condemn me ; and, for your part, I see you are utterly ruined. I have done all in my power to reclaim you, but it is all in vain. I rejoiced at your birth, and I once thought you as hopeful a young man as any in this town ; but now I shall have no more comfort in you while I live. Your mother and I are both growing old, and you will bring down our grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. These Methodists are the most bewitching people upon earth : when once a person hears them, there is no possibility of persuading him to leave them again. You think to make my house a preaching-house when once my head is laid ; but I will take care that it shall never be yours. I will leave it to the poor of the parish, before the Methodists shall have anything to do with it. Do pray give up this way, and let me die in peace ; and then you may do as you please when I am no more." Such a speech as this, from an affectionate parent, anyone may suppose, was exceedingly affecting. But, although my heart was ready to break, I could only reply, "When I can see sufficient reason to oblige

you in this particular, I certainly will, but not till then." He said, "I see it is all in vain; I must give you up. I am bound to pray for you as long as I live; but I see no ground of hope concerning you." I went to bed with a very sorrowful heart, but fully determined, let what would be the consequence, to seek the salvation of God.

My brother and I now began to take sweet counsel together, and greatly strengthened each other's hands in the Lord. We laboured to oblige our parents in every respect, to the very uttermost of our power, except in this one thing, which concerned the salvation of our souls; but, in my absence, my father so powerfully wrought upon my brother by his tender and affectionate entreaties, that he promised him he would hear the Methodists no more. This troubled my mind exceedingly; but I loved him too well to give him up. I persuaded him to go along with me to preaching once more; and the word took deep hold on his heart, and from that time he never looked back, but was faithful unto death. We frequently prayed together in our bed-chamber, and my mother got upon the stairs to hear us, and desired to join in prayer with us: soon after this my father desired to do the same; but as I had not then found a sense of the love of God, I had not sufficient courage to pray when he was present. His mind had been variously exercised: sometimes he thought he would use violence, and, at all events, prevent my hearing these men any more: then he thought, "But what, if he should be in the right? then how dreadful would it be!" I had bought the Rev. John Wesley's Sermons, and he read some of them. This gave him a more favourable opinion of the doctrines of the Methodists, and softened his



mind in some degree: but the minister of the parish, being a notorious drunkard, and a determined enemy to the Methodists, beginning to fear he should lose all our family, gathered up all the idle stories he could hear of respecting these despised people; and there were great plenty of such in those days. These he brought to my father, and thereby created me a great deal of trouble; but, by the mercy of God, I was generally enabled to search out the truth, and confute him, so that his bad designs were brought to nothing. And this wrought together for good in the end.

Still, however, my father was so exceedingly troubled respecting me, that we had no peace in our family, and I thought we should be obliged to part after all. As I could not fully open my mind to him, on account of the warmth of his natural temper, I was determined to write to him. I endeavoured to describe the state of my own mind, and showed him the extreme danger I apprehended myself to be in. Reasoning the case with him to this purpose: "What worse am I, in any respect, for hearing the Methodists? Am I disobedient to you, or my mother, in anything save this one? Do I neglect any part of my business? Must not everyone give an account of himself to God? Doth the law condemn any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth? Why, then, do you condemn the Methodists, whom you have never heard, and know very little of? If you will only hear them three times, and prove from the Scriptures that their doctrine is false, I will hear them no more; but, if you will not, my conscience obliges me to hear them, till it shall please God to convince me of my mistake by some other means." He seriously considered the contents

of my letter ; and, being exceedingly desirous to reclaim me, he consented to go. The first he heard was that truly simple and upright man of God, Mr. Matthew Watson, of Leeds. He was not a little surprised to hear him pray and preach so remarkably well extempore ; and was pleased, rather than much profited. The next was Mr. Benjamin Beanland, who was an excellent preacher ; but he happened to say something which my father thought reflected upon the clergy : this he could not bear, and accordingly was so highly offended, that he would not so much as take his hat off during the whole service. The third he heard was Mr. John Pool, whom he liked very well, and was willing to hear a fourth, who happened to be Mr. John Hosmer, whom he greatly approved of ; but still he was not convinced, though he could not disprove their doctrine. However, he began to pray that the Lord would be pleased to show him the good and the right way. And one Sunday morning, while he was earnestly crying to God in the stable, where he thought no one could hear him, Divine light was communicated to his mind : his conscience was deeply awakened, and he was brought into the bitterest distress ; insomuch that he trembled exceedingly, and even roared for the very disquietness of his soul, being ashamed and confounded, so that he could hardly hope for mercy. On this memorable day, my soul was, in a sense, brought out of prison, as I had from this time full liberty to attend upon all Divine ordinances without interruption. Very soon after, also, both myself and all the family, eight in number, joined the society. And in the year 1759 my father even invited the preachers to his house, where they have been freely entertained ever since. In so doing, he prevented

me from making his house a preaching-house, as he had before said ; for he made it one himself.

It is well known that particular persons may be very differently affected, when under the awakening influences of the Spirit of God. At this time, although I was deeply sensible of my lost estate, and filled with the most intense desire after salvation, yet I laboured under the intolerable burden of a hard and insensible heart. I should have been glad to have wept my very life away ; but, alas ! I only mourned because I could not mourn as I wished. My soul seemed shut out from the presence of God ; I had no access to His throne, no comfortable freedom in prayer, but was as if surrounded with clouds and darkness, and burdened with spiritual death. I was now tempted to think, that if I had been openly wicked, I might have been brought much sooner to the saving knowledge of God ; as then, I supposed, I should have experienced deeper repentance, and, through feeling a heavier load of guilt upon my conscience, should have prayed the more earnestly for pardoning mercy. Hence I was ready to question, whether it would not be the best way to turn back for a while, and drink in iniquity like water, that I might return and repent more effectually ! This, however, I could not do, because sin was exceeding bitter to me, and I abhorred it as the accursed thing that was the cause of all my trouble : besides, I saw that if I should sin wilfully, Divine grace might justly be withheld from me, and I might die in sin, and perish for ever. Very seasonably, Bunyan's book, termed "Heart's Ease in Heart Trouble," fell into my hands, where I met with this very temptation stated and answered. I heartily praised the Lord for this word in season. The snare

of the devil was broken, and I saw the state of my soul more clearly than ever.

At this time the Lord greatly revived His work among us. As we now had regular preaching in my father's house, many of our neighbours came to hear, and several were awakened, and joined the society. This was matter of great thankfulness to me; but still I was not brought into the liberty of the children of God. I therefore cried earnestly to Him, that He would graciously deliver me from that spiritual insensibility which I laboured under; and He condescended to grant my request. I went to a village called Barwick, to hear that heart-searching preacher, Mr. Hosmer; and the mighty power of God was present. All on a sudden my heart was broken in pieces, my spirit was deeply wounded, my head was as waters, and my eyes fountains of tears; and, before I was aware, I was crying aloud with an exceeding bitter cry. The trouble and anguish of spirit I then felt far exceeds all description. The arrows of the Almighty stuck fast in my flesh, and the poison of them drank up my spirits; and yet I could heartily praise the Lord, while in the deepest distress, because He had answered my long-continued prayer. I now sought the Lord with my whole heart, and constantly attended all the ordinances of God, both by night and day. I frequently walked eight or ten miles to hear the word preached, and constantly walked six miles to meet my class. I have gone over Blackmoor, so called, many a dark night, quite alone, and when it has been knee-deep in snow. Such were the desires which the Lord gave me, that nothing appeared difficult, nothing hard, that I had to pass through. So deep a sense had I, so keen a conviction, of my deplorable con-

dition, as a fallen, guilty, depraved sinner, that I had no rest in my bones by reason of my sin. Like Ephraim of old, "I bemoaned myself," and, like David, "roared for the disquietness of my soul." Anyone might have read the distress of my mind in my countenance. The things of this world were made bitter to me, and my lawful business became a burden. The love of this world, and all desire of making a figure in life, or of conforming to the customs or fashions of mankind, got their death's wound in my mind at that time, and have never recovered strength to this day, and I am persuaded never will.

One morning, as I was walking in the fields, in the deepest sorrow, being ready to conclude that there was no help, no mercy, for me, as, notwithstanding all my best and most powerful efforts, I was a poor prisoner still; the Lord was pleased to comfort my drooping heart, by darting these encouraging words into my mind: "Wait thou the Lord's pleasure, be strong, and He shall comfort thine heart." Hereby I was refreshed for the present, and was afterwards enabled to hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of God. About this time a neighbour of ours was said to be brought to enjoy a sense of the love of God, under the third Gospel sermon which he had heard. This I, at first, thought impossible, till I heard Mr. James Oddie give public thanks on his account the next morning. I did not consider that "one day with the Lord is as a thousand years," and that He can do a great work in a little time. This poor man had lived many years without God in the world, but seeing me and my brother go so constantly past his house to the preaching, he was cut to the heart, and thought, "What unwearied pains



do these young lads take to get to heaven, and I take none at all!" From this he began to inquire what he must do to be saved; and, like many others, took refuge among the Methodists. After this he walked with God many years, and died in great peace, while we were commending his soul to God in solemn prayer. The consideration of his sudden conversion deeply affected my mind. I returned home, and retired to my bed-chamber; but here I had not room sufficient to vent my extreme distress. I therefore went into the barn, where I thought no one could either see or hear me. Here I wept, and prayed, and roared aloud, my distress being greater than I was well able to bear; yet I was not without hope, but had an earnest expectation that, unworthy as I was, the Lord would be gracious unto me. But I was not so private as I supposed: I found that my brother was in another part of the barn, in as deep distress as myself: and my father and mother soon heard our cries, and came to see what was the matter. My sister and her husband came also; so that we were now six in number, all in the same state of mind, and in the deepest distress. Had any of our neighbours either seen or heard us, they would certainly have thought that we were all beside ourselves. It was, indeed, an affecting sight; and the more so, as we had no one to assist us in any degree, either by prayer, or Christian counsel. But still we were none of us delivered: "the children were brought to the birth, but there was not strength to bring forth."

I sought the Lord as if there had not been a person upon earth who wanted salvation but myself. I could not, indeed, but heartily desire that all mankind might be saved; yet I could not rejoice when I

heard of different persons being brought into liberty, while I myself remained in bondage; as I plainly saw, if all the world were converted to God, and I were not, it would signify nothing to me. I went to the house of God, time after time, weary and heavy laden, yet in full expectation of meeting with my Saviour there; and many times my soul was, as I thought, just ready to lay hold on Him, but unbelieving fears prevented me. And yet I am satisfied that there was nothing, which I believed to be contrary to the will of God, that I had not given up. I was perfectly willing, and I had almost said infinitely desirous, to be saved upon God's own terms, and in His own way; and yet I could not believe. So that, after more than forty years' experience of the mercy and love of God, I am constrained to believe, that faith is the gift and the work of God, and that the soul must be under a peculiar influence of the Divine Spirit in the act of believing. The infinitely wise and blessed God is perfectly acquainted with the deceitfulness of the human heart, and well knoweth that, in the general, what we obtain at an easy rate, we too often set but little value upon. Therefore, that we may highly prize, and properly improve, His grace when we obtain it, He gives us deeply to feel the want of it, and, in a good measure, to know the worth of it, before He imparts it. Yea, and He gives us to taste the gall and wormwood, the bitterness of sin, and makes us heartily sick of it, before He delivers us from it. I adore His sacred name, that He took this method with me: He dug deep, and laid the foundation sure, and hath carried on the building to this day!

The time of my deliverance now drew near. I went to a neighbouring village to hear Mr. Hosmer.

It was a new place, and many came from various parts to hear the word of God. An extraordinary influence attended the word that night. There was a mighty shaking among the dry bones. Mr. Hosmer preached upon the words of Isaiah xli. 10: "Fear not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee," &c. These precious words were applied to my honoured father's mind by the Spirit of God, while Mr. Hosmer was reading them, and he was brought into marvellous light and liberty. Here I cannot but admire the wisdom and goodness of God, in the methods He takes to "hide pride from man," and "that he who glorieth may glory in the Lord." My dear father, who had long been so great a hindrance to me, was brought into the favour and family of God before me: the consideration of this constrained me to praise God, and yet it greatly increased my trouble. I kneeled before the Lord throughout the whole service, and for a considerable time after it was over, weeping, trembling, and crying to the Lord for mercy; but deliverance was not yet. Mr. Hosmer, in tender compassion to the souls whom he saw in such deep distress, appointed a meeting for extraordinary prayer the next morning, which was Sunday, March 16th, 1760. I went to that meeting deeply distressed, yet with a full expectation of finding the salvation of God. It appeared to me, that I had no hope beyond that meeting; that if I did not find the Lord there, I never should find Him: nothing but clouds and thick darkness appeared to me beyond that meeting. Before the service began, a person who tenderly pitied me said, "Fear not: the Lord graciously visited your father last night, and you will find the blessing this morning. You have been

an instrument in His hand in bringing all the family into the way, and He will not leave you behind." These words afforded me no comfort, as I knew very well I must not expect salvation because I had done something good, but wholly by grace, through faith in the blood of Christ. The service no sooner began than the Lord was wonderfully present. A person, who had been ten years by the way-side, was brought into liberty, and walked therein for many years, till he finished his earthly course with joy. I soon heard another, whose voice I well knew, cry for mercy; and his heaviness was soon turned into joy, and he has retained his confidence in God to this day. I was upon my knees in the middle of the room, and, if possible, in greater anguish of spirit than ever: surely "the sorrows of death compassed me about, and the pains of hell got hold upon me; I found trouble and heaviness. Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul." He heard me from His holy hill; He spoke, and I heard His voice. He graciously applied that blessed word to my mind, Isaiah xliii. 1, "Thou art Mine." In a moment I was perfectly delivered from all my guilty fears; my deep sorrow, my extreme distress, was entirely gone. The peace of God flowed into my conscience, and the love of God was shed abroad in my heart abundantly; my whole soul was filled with serious, sacred, heavenly joy; yea, I triumphed in the God of my salvation. The kingdom of heaven was opened in my mind in that happy hour, and the light of God's countenance shone with resplendent brightness upon me. I did not know that the words applied to my mind were in the Scriptures; but this did not at all damp my joy in the Lord, as I was well assured they were the voice of

God to me. But very soon afterwards my brother told me I might find them in the Bible ; and I rose early one morning, and, after prayer, opened my Bible upon that very passage. This was a kind of sealing of the promise to my soul.

The deliverance which the Lord wrought for me was so great, and the change in my mind was so extraordinary, that I never could doubt of my acceptance with God through Christ to this day. My convictions of sin had been so deep, painful, and of such long continuance, that, when deliverance came, it was not only the more welcome, but also the more clear. And as I had been favoured with so clear a manifestation of the love of God to my soul, no one need to wonder that, ever since I first acted in a public capacity in the church, I have been led to bear my testimony to the absolute necessity of every one's enjoying "the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins ;" especially as the Scriptures are so remarkably clear and express upon the subject.

Having found salvation myself, I felt an intense desire that others should enjoy the same unspeakable blessing. I therefore began a meeting for prayer on Sunday evenings, and many of our neighbours attended. As we had no one who could give a word of exhortation, I sometimes read a sermon, and sometimes the Homilies of the Established Church. These had not been heard of for a long time, and therefore were quite new ; and the inhabitants, being one and all church people, were very willing to hear them. The minister of the parish, being, as I said before, a determined enemy to true religion, was highly offended, and laboured with all his might to prejudice the people against me. But he lost his bad labour, and was so provoked by the people turning



Methodists, that he left the town. I also read select passages from Burkitt on the New Testament; and afterwards I took God's own book, read part of a chapter, and endeavoured to explain it. The people bore with my weakness, constantly attended at all opportunities, and my feeble endeavours were crowned with some degree of success.

About six weeks after I found peace with God, Mr. Hosmer divided our little society into two classes, and made me the leader of one of them. This was a heavy cross, but I did not dare to refuse taking it up. The first time I met the class, I was brought into a much higher state of grace than before. From that time I enjoyed the abiding witness of the Spirit; my mind was constantly stayed upon God, and I enjoyed uninterrupted communion with Him. For many years after this, no evil temper, unholy desire, or carnal affection, had any place in my soul; but I was favoured with the continued presence of God.

On December 28th, 1760, my dear brother was brought into liberty. He had for many months been deeply and painfully exercised, and had earnestly sought the Lord with strong cries and many tears; but his soul was now brought out of prison. Eight of us had joined the society at the same time, and now my happiness was complete; for my eldest sister's husband also found the Lord soon after my brother, and we all rejoiced in God our Saviour together.

I was now exceedingly pressed to visit the neighbouring societies, and give them a word of exhortation. This I at first absolutely refused, as I thought myself utterly unqualified for anything of that kind; but in 1761 Mr. John Johnson, being stationed in the Leeds Circuit, and, from the first time he saw me,

being persuaded the Lord had called me to preach His Gospel, followed me with continual advice, persuasions, and even threatenings of the Divine displeasure if I would not obey the call of God. He even put me into the Plan among the local preachers before I had ever preached at all. This was a sore trial to me; and, to avoid it, I had thoughts of leaving my own neighbourhood, and going where I was not known. However, after much prayer, when the time appointed came, I went to Horsforth, the place appointed, and there attempted to preach upon John iii. 16: "God so loved the world," &c. I was also put down in the Plan to preach at Chapel-Town the same day; but was at a loss for a text. I retired, and while I was pleading with the Lord in prayer, His condescending mercy opened Jeremiah xxxi. 18, 19, to me in such a manner as I shall never forget. From this time I continued preaching occasionally till August, 1762, when the general Conference was held at Leeds. Mr. Johnson earnestly pressed me to attend it, which I did; and, without my knowledge, he recommended me as a candidate for travelling as a preacher. When Mr. Wesley asked me if I were willing to give up myself to the work, I trembled exceedingly; for I was far from being satisfied that this was the will of the Lord concerning me: however, as I seriously believed that they were a body of men that were under the Divine influence, I replied, "I am deeply sensible of my own weakness and insufficiency for so great a work; but if you and the brethren think good to make a trial of me, I give up myself to you." Accordingly I was sent into the York Circuit, with Peter Jaco, John and Nicholas Manners, Richard Henderson, and James Cotty.

It was a very grievous trial to my dear parents and Christian friends to part with me, as they feared that, when I was gone, the work of God among them would come to nothing. But the Lord took care of this : I was no sooner removed, but He raised up my brother, who filled up my place well for many years, even to the time of his death. I had met a few people at Harewood, who were left as sheep without a shepherd ; but how wonderful are the ways of God ! Many of the inhabitants, when they heard that I was gone out to preach the Gospel, said, if I would come and preach there, they would come and hear me : I did so, and they came accordingly ; and from that time there has been preaching in that town, and many precious souls have been savingly brought to God, and some have died happy in His love. I entered upon my Circuit with a single eye, having nothing in view but the honour of God, in the salvation of souls ; and such was the labour and the many and great hardships the preachers had then to endure, that I rejoiced in hope I should soon be worn out, finish my course, and be happy with my God for ever. The work of the Lord prospered much in several places of the Circuit, which was very large, taking us eight weeks to go once through it. The people treated me with the tenderest affection, and the Lord condescended to crown my feeble labours with a blessing. I did not labour in vain, or spend my strength for nought. Yet I had many trials ; for in several places we were greatly disturbed with mobs, especially at Beverley.

I was not, however, yet satisfied respecting my call to the ministry, as I was not always favoured with that freedom of mind and enlargement of heart in preaching which are so desirable. And, being

naturally of an exceedingly self-diffident spirit, and having sometimes to preach where there were local preachers who were, I supposed, much wiser and better qualified than myself, I seriously thought of giving up travelling at the close of the year. Mr. J. Mannors, who acted the part of a tender father to me, hearing of this, said, with great affection, "I suppose you doubt concerning your call to the ministry." I answered, "I do." He replied, "Why, you have no more cause to doubt of that than I have." This was a word in season to me. I was sure that he was a much better judge of such things than I was; and, as I well knew him to be a wise and holy man, his speaking in such strong terms concerning my call, helped me not a little.

Being encouraged by this faithful servant of God, I went to the Conference in company with that amiable man, Mr. Richard Henderson. This was the first time I ever was in London, and the Conference was held in Spitalfields chapel. We had no money matters to settle in these days; but after the preachers' characters were examined, and they were stationed for the next year, all the time was taken up in speaking upon spiritual subjects. This was the only time I ever saw that faithful servant of God, the Welsh apostle, Mr. Howel Harris.

At this Conference some of the preachers began to call in question the power Mr. Wesley exercised over them and the societies. But Mr. Harris pleaded his cause effectually, and among other things said, "If Mr. Wesley should, at any time, abuse his power, who will weep for him, if his own children will not?" These simple words had an astonishing effect upon the minds of the preachers; they were all in tears on every side, and gave up the matter entirely.

At this Conference in 1763 the Preachers' Fund was first begun. It was said that several of the preachers were growing old, and asked, what should they do for support, if they should live to be past their labour? And, as others of them had families, what would become of their widows and children, if their husbands and fathers should die, and leave them behind? Being young and inexperienced, I was utterly amazed at hearing this. For I thought that every Christian minister had an entire confidence in God, respecting temporal as well as spiritual things, so as to be perfectly free from all care as to what might befall either himself or family. However, although Mr. Wesley did not greatly approve of what was proposed, as he always thought it worldly, and not Christian prudence, to provide for a rainy day, yet he consented to it, and the Fund was begun.

I had now an opportunity to receive the holy sacrament among the children of God. And to see the large and deeply-serious congregations that attended the chapels, the uncommon number of communicants, their devout behaviour, and the order in which the whole service was conducted, was highly pleasing to me. O, how divinely pleasant, and how truly profitable, is it to wait upon God in His holy ordinances, when He is present in the power of His Spirit, and they are conducted according to His own appointment!

As our Conferences in these days only lasted from Tuesday morning till Friday noon, my stay in London was very short; it being thought very wrong for the preachers to stay in town at all after the Conference was concluded. I was appointed for the Howarth Circuit, with William Fugill, Paul Green-



wood, and Daniel Bumstead. Upon coming into the Circuit we found all the people mourning the loss of that eminently faithful servant of God, the Rev. William Grimshaw, who had died in April that year. Many, very many had, I am inclined to think, put that excellent man in God's place, and seriously thought that the prosperity of the work entirely depended upon him. Hence they thought, "Now he is gone, all is over with us; we shall surely come to nothing." God, we know, is a jealous God, and will not have us to ascribe that to any creature, which we ought to ascribe to Him alone. As the people, I am satisfied, did this, the Lord called His faithful servant away; and, it was very remarkable, the work prospered wonderfully; and I believe there was much more good done in that Circuit in that one year, than had been done in seven years before that time. In Keighley, also, and the neighbourhood, there was a glorious revival of the work of God, such as no one then living could remember to have seen. It seemed as if the word of God could carry all before it, and men, women, and children were converted on all sides.

When the year was expired, I attended the Conference in Bristol, in August, 1764. Having been very much united to Mr. Bumstead the preceding year, and he being appointed for Norwich, he requested Mr. Wesley to let me go along with him, which was granted. This proved a distressing trial to me, as I looked upon myself as a very improper person for such a place. My mind was painfully exercised, but was much relieved by hearing the Rev. Mr. Madan upon 1 Cor. i. 30: "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus," &c. Twelve clergymen attended that Conference, whose principal business was to

convince us, that we ought not to preach in any parish where there was a Gospel minister. Some of them were much more moderate than others. One of them said, "If a layman be called of God to preach the Gospel, then he has as good a right to do it as any clergyman whatever." Mr. Madan could not agree to this, but said he should not dare to forbid such a person.

The Conference being over, I set forward with my dear friend Mr. Bumstead, and spent the Lord's day in London, where I preached for the first time in Snowsfields chapel, which was just then built; and from thence we proceeded to Colchester, among a very affectionate, but exceedingly poor people; and from thence went on to Norwich. Here we had very large congregations, with abundance of persecution, both in the city and country. To break the windows, disturb our meetings, and abuse our persons, was their constant practice, especially during the winter; so that we were frequently obliged to complain to the magistrates: but they granted us very little relief. None of them would go a step farther than they were obliged, for fear of being persecuted themselves. I spent part of this year in Colchester, and we began to preach at a small town called Nayland. Here the mob was exceedingly violent. One night they supplied themselves with large oxen-horns, and sounded them to such a degree, that when I spoke as loud as I possibly could, I could not hear the sound of my own voice, nor could I satisfy myself by any means whether I had any voice or not. I was obliged to give over; and having to return to Colchester that night, our friends thought it would not be safe for me to take horse at the door, but to walk through the town, and they would meet me at the

bridge with the horse. I did so, and the mob made a way, and I walked quietly through them to the end of the town; but as my horse was not come, I was obliged to wait a considerable time, when the mob closed me in on every side. But the hand of God was upon them, and not one of them was suffered to hurt me. I was astonished at the goodness of God. They neither cast dirt nor stones, nor attempted to throw me into the river, nor do anything of the kind, although they seemed quite prepared for any mischief their bad master might set them upon. I found an inexpressible tranquillity in my own mind all the time, having no sort of fear as to what they might do. The poor people who came along with me from Colchester did not escape so well. They abused them in the most shameful and cruel manner, and some of them did not recover for a considerable time. I was obliged to appear at the quarter-sessions the next day, where the Rev. Dr. Tanner was chairman. He did not appear to encourage persecution, but acted the part of an upright magistrate towards us; and finding that we had done nothing contrary to the laws of our country, he desired us to forgive what was past, and he would take care, for the time to come, that we should not be molested. I told him that we were far from seeking any sort of revenge: those people had certainly treated us in a very improper, not to say in a very cruel, manner; but since he was so kind as to promise us protection for the time to come, we should willingly forgive all that was past.

We had an extraordinary prospect at Yarmouth this year of much good being done. But one of our leaders, turning Calvinist, divided the society, and our pleasing prospect was entirely blasted. It is

truly astonishing to think of the confusion and discord this occasioned. The unhappy effects of that breach have been but too sensibly felt by the pious people in that town to this day. We also began preaching at Lowestoft that year. Here we had mobs and tumults constantly ; but the Lord gave us and the people strength according to our day ; a society was raised, and a work was then begun, which has been carried on to the present time.

I had abundant reason to praise the Lord for my fellow-labourer. We were of one heart and one soul. We cordially loved each other, and on all occasions acted in unity and harmony. The people in general saw this, and it had a very blessed effect upon them ; as it utterly destroyed all party spirit, and put an end, in a great measure, to evil speaking. It surely is a great happiness when the preachers, in any particular Circuit, really love one another ; for as this will naturally tend to increase their own happiness, it will also greatly help their usefulness among the people. I found Mr. Bumstead a truly upright man, much devoted to God, zealous for His glory, and diligent in His work. A more cordial or faithful friend I never met with, nor one who, I believe, was more unreservedly or more disinterestedly given up to God and His work. It was a great pity he ever left the public work : he certainly went out of the Divine order, and I am inclined to think suffered not a little in his mind on that account.

The year being expired, my dear friend and I set forward to the Conference, which was held in Manchester, in 1765. On our way we were detained at Newark-upon-Trent on the Lord's day. Being obliged to take up our abode at an inn, we were rather at a loss, as we knew of no religious people

in that town. We walked into the stable, and I asked the ostler if there were any Dissenters in that town. He said, he did not know, but there wanted something to reform the people, for they were very wicked. I replied, "You say you do not know whether there are any Dissenters: then you have not lived here long? Pray where do you come from?" He replied, "From Malton, in Yorkshire." I asked, "Pray do you know Mr. Wilson, of Malton?" "Yes," said the man; "and I know you, too. I have heard you preach there."

We walked into the churchyard in search of serious people. I thought I saw a person who looked more solid than ordinary, and walked towards him. The man looked rather earnestly upon me, and said, "Pray, sir, are you upon a journey?" I answered, "Yes." "So am I," said he; "but pray, sir, are you not a preacher?" I answered, "I am." "A Methodist preacher?" said he. I replied, "Yes." "Pray what is your name?" I answered, "My name is Pawson." "John Pawson," he replied: "I have heard you preach at Northallerton. I was looking about for some serious person, as I am quite a stranger in this place." How condescendingly kind is our gracious God! We were looking about for a religious person, the honest stranger was doing the same, and the Lord granted our joint desire, and brought us together. After the service of the church, we returned to our inn. I soon observed that the waiter was remarkably attentive to all we said; and as our conversation was wholly upon religion, I perceived that he took particular notice of it. In a while, he ventured to speak, and said, "Gentlemen, we have a very good church in this town, and a tolerably good minister



too, if you choose to go." I replied, "Yes, we have been at church this forenoon: we think it right to attend public worship at all opportunities. Have you any religious people in this town?" "Very few indeed, sir," said he; "and the few there are, they call them Methodists. I know of only one woman, and myself, and they call us Methodists, although I never saw one in my life that I know of; but I have been led to think, they are very good people, because they are so much hated and despised by the wicked." I replied, "I am inclined to think that you have formed a right judgment of them: I believe the Methodists in general fear the Lord, and endeavour to honour and obey Him." "I have heard much," added he, "of Messrs. Whitefield and Wesley; but I am surprised that they should preach out of the church. And, likewise, they preach without a book: I wonder how the people can understand them." I replied, "You know our Lord preached upon a mountain, and St. Paul in the house of one Justus, and in the school of one Tyrannus. And as to their preaching extemporarily, I suppose the people may understand them the better, as they adapt their discourses to the capacities as well as the states of their hearers. I am a Methodist preacher, and so is my fellow-traveller. I preached in the street at Norwich only last Lord's day." "Are you, sir?" said the man. "I have lived seven years at this house, and I never remember to have seen a religious person call here before, except the Bishop of Durham: he appeared to be a serious man." It is impossible to describe the delight this honest young man appeared to take in our company. He told us his experience, and how he spent his time. It was evident that the Lord had graciously visited his soul, though he had never

heard a Gospel sermon in his life, and had only the Bible, the Common Prayer-Book, and Milton's Paradise Lost to read. He spent all the time he could possibly spare with us, willingly joined us in prayer, and would needs treat us with a bottle of wine, but this we refused. We thought it not a little remarkable, that, strangers as we were in the place, the Lord should, in so particular a manner, direct us to, it seems, the only religious persons in the town.

In our way to Manchester, we called at Thorner, and I had the happiness to find all my father's family in good health, and happy in the enjoyment of God. I attended the Conference, where all the affairs of our Connexion were settled in great peace and harmony; and I was appointed for the Birstal Circuit, along with Mr. John Murlin, a holy, upright, good-natured man, and Mr. Parson Greenwood, an Israelite indeed. This was a happy and a prosperous year, and we extended our borders considerably. Mr. Wesley had withdrawn the preaching from Huddersfield for several years, at the request of the Rev. Mr. Venn, who thought himself sufficient for that parish; but we now began preaching there again, and by this means a way was opened into the mountains above, where the people in general were little better than heathens, ignorant and wicked to a high degree. The Lord hath since then wrought a wonderful change among them. Several chapels have been built in that part, and many souls savingly converted to God. When I was preaching at Thong, the minister of Honley sent the constable to take me up: he happened to come in just as I was taking my text. The man was so surprised to find that I took a text out of the Bible, that he resolved he would stay and hear me out: he did so, and was convinced

of the truth, turned to the Lord, found salvation, lived a few years happy in the love of God, and died in peace. So far was Satan disappointed of his hope in sending the poor man to the preaching!

In the year 1766 the Conference was held in Leeds, when I was appointed to the Manchester Circuit, along with Mr. Jaco, Mr. Paul Greenwood, and Mr. John Allen. We were as the heart of one man. I am inclined to think, that there never were four men more closely united than we were. Our Circuit was very extensive, as it took in Stockport, Macclesfield, Congleton, Newcastle, Warrington, Liverpool, Bolton, and many other towns. This was a very happy and a prosperous year; but in March the Lord was pleased to call home His faithful servant, Paul Greenwood, who died of a fever at Warrington. This was a distressing trial to me. He was a truly apostolical man, and exceedingly beloved by the people. He was one of the most sincere and upright men I ever was acquainted with, had travelled about twenty years, and had been a blessing wherever he laboured. I never saw a man more universally lamented by the people than he was. I preached his funeral sermon in deep sorrow, yet with uncommon liberty, from 1 Cor. xv. 57: "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory," &c. Many souls were added to the church of God in the course of this year. The next Conference was held in London, which I attended; and was ordered to return to Manchester along with Mr. John, afterwards Dr., Whitehead, Mr. John Pool, and Mr. William Fugill. I had the care of this very large Circuit upon me, being appointed the superintendent, or, as the term then was, assistant preacher; so called, from assisting Mr. Wesley in watching over the societies, and keep-

ing up a proper discipline among them. I endeavoured to give up myself unreservedly to the Lord, and my strength was proportioned to my day. I was not so happy with my fellow-labourers as the last year, except with Mr. Whitehead: he was then an excellent preacher, and highly esteemed by the people; and that friendship between us was begun this year, which continued to his death, and I am persuaded will be renewed in eternity.

At the conclusion of this year, I found we had added four hundred and thirty souls to the society, and there was good reason to believe that above two hundred had found a clear sense of the love of God. Praise the Lord, O my soul, for His abundant goodness! This was the first Circuit that I ever was stationed in for two years. By this means I had gained a more perfect acquaintance with the people, and was abundantly more closely united to them; but, alas, while in this world, every pleasure has something of pain attending it. My strong affection for them made it the harder to part from them, so that I suffered not a little when Providence called me away. But "we are only strangers and sojourners upon earth, as all our fathers were."

In 1768 our Conference was held in Bristol, where all was peace, harmony, and love. I was appointed for the Wednesbury Circuit, along with my faithful friend, Mr. John Allen, and Mr. Isaac Waldron. The work of the Lord greatly prospered in our hands; we planted the Gospel in fourteen new places, and we were obliged to call out that excellent young man, Mr. Samuel Wells. A more upright creature I never knew. He walked with God, diligently laboured in His vineyard a few years, and then died full of faith and the love of God. In the

strength of his years, he was called to his reward: surely the judgments of our God are a great deep! For some time after I came into this Circuit, I was in some degree of heaviness. My soul mourned the loss of my Christian friends. I had not fully learned to enjoy the society of those I loved, while the Lord permitted them to remain with me, or me with them, and, when He called, then cheerfully to give them up, and go where He appointed; rejoicing in hope of meeting them again, where pain and parting are no more for ever.

In the course of this year I had such a deep sense of my own weakness and unprofitableness as led me to think that the Lord would lay me entirely aside. But I afterwards learned that, even while my mind was under this cloud, the Lord crowned my feeble labours with success, and made the word a blessing to many. When this painful trial was over, I laboured with great satisfaction, and the Lord added to His church this year three hundred souls. Here it was that I first became acquainted with one of the most amiable families I had ever known,—Mr. Eden's, in Gloucestershire. It was a heaven upon earth to be there. They were so unreservedly devoted to God, so simple of heart, so lively and zealous in the service of a good Master, that, as I could not but rejoice when I had the prospect of spending a day with them, so I never parted from them but with a degree of reluctance.

In 1769 our Conference was held in Leeds. It was at this time that we first sent preachers to America. Several of the brethren offered to go, if I would go along with them; but I did not see that the Lord called me to leave my native country, or to lay so heavy a cross upon my affectionate, and now

aged, parents ; and therefore I was appointed for London. This was exceedingly painful to me ; as I judged myself wholly unqualified for so high a station ; but Mr. Wesley would have it so, and I submitted, only requesting that my beloved friend, Mr. Allen, might go along with me, which was readily granted. Here I found I was to preach to a wise and deeply-experienced people. The consideration of this led me earnestly to pray, that the Lord would grant me that wisdom and grace which I clearly saw I should stand in need of, in order that I might be made useful to them. I found my mind powerfully drawn to give up myself wholly to God ; and from the fullest conviction, that the religion of Jesus Christ is the happiest and best thing in the world, I resolved, in the strength of the Lord, to follow Him fully, and to spend and be spent in His work.

I entered upon my labours with a lively expectation that the Lord would give me strength according to my day ; and I had infinite cause to praise His sacred name, that He favoured me with freedom of mind, in declaring His truth to the people ; and I had the satisfaction to know that my labours were generally acceptable, and attended with a blessing. Here I got acquainted with several intelligent and experienced Christians, who had been members of the society from the beginning. Their conversation was very profitable to me ; and I was not only quickened to greater diligence, but greatly encouraged to “press towards the mark for the prize of my high calling.”

In the month of October I received the affecting news that my honoured father was dangerously ill. I therefore went down to my native place, and



found him exceedingly weak, and not likely to live long. He bore his affliction with steady patience, and entire resignation to the will of God. He was exceedingly thankful that he had lived to see all his family savingly converted, made happy in God, and living in love and unity one with another. With tears of gratitude on this account, he said, "I think I may die with such a degree of peace as few have done before." Some time before he died he had a discovery, which affected him exceedingly. He saw (in such a manner as words cannot fully express) into what a holy and happy state the Lord brought him when he was first justified; what great privileges and unspeakable blessings he then enjoyed. But he painfully saw that he had not stood fast in that state of liberty into which he was brought; but, by giving way to his natural temper, which was exceedingly warm, he had lost ground, had grieved the Holy Spirit, and dishonoured his God. He saw that, although he had been remarkably diligent in attending all Divine ordinances, (and I believe very few ever excelled him in this,) yet he had often been a formal worshipper, and had too much substituted the means in the place of the end; so that he had made little or no progress in the life and power of religion. This discovery occasioned the deepest sorrow, and led him to the closest self-examination. He freely opened his distressed mind to me. I said, "The Lord hath made this discovery to humble, but not to discourage, you. He certainly designs that you should return to Him with your whole heart, that He may heal every wound, restore to you the joy of His salvation, and establish you with His free Spirit." He was greatly encouraged, but never satisfied till the Lord gave him a clear sense of His

love. From this time he was as a little child ; his whole soul was renewed in the image of God ; and although Satan sorely tempted him on account of his past unfaithfulness, yet he held fast his confidence in God to the last.

He attended the preaching till a few days before his death: he would be led down to the chapel, as long as he was able to walk, between two of us. In this he was an example to all who knew him. He said to me one day, "Do you think we shall know each other in heaven?" I answered, "Yes, certainly: heaven will perfect, not impair, our knowledge." He replied, with inexpressible joy, "O, how shall I rejoice to see any of you follow me to that happy place!" I was with him the whole day on which he died. He said very little, but seemed to be wholly engaged with God in prayer; and my mind was so deeply affected, that I could say very little to him. Towards the evening, I asked him how he found the state of his mind. He replied, with all the strength he had, "I feel no doubt or fear; I find I can pray always." I said, "Then you find your mind stayed upon God?" He answered, "O yes, firmly." I said, "It will not be long before you shall be with Him." He answered, "I do not care how soon." A little after this, a few Christian friends came in, and we joined in prayer with him, and solemnly commended his departing spirit to the God of love. As he was now exceedingly deaf, I asked him, if he heard us. He replied, "O yes, and I felt too: I am quite happy." After this he only said, "I long to part;" and then quietly fell asleep in my arms, without a sigh or groan, or any struggle at all, in the seventy-fifth year of his age, having lived in the married state forty-seven years.

Thus died my most affectionate father ; and by his death, I trust, I learned, more fully than before, how indispensably necessary it is to maintain our ground against our own natural temper. If we do not, we surely plant our dying pillow beforehand with thorns, and prepare a bitter portion for our souls on our death-bed, when otherwise we might drink deep of the cup of Divine consolation. How many of the children of God suffer the roots of bitterness, their own bad tempers, which had been effectually conquered, to spring up again, and hereby are kept in a very low state of grace, while they exceedingly grieve that Holy Spirit who would otherwise save them to the uttermost !

When we had committed the mortal part of my father to the grave, and I had settled the temporal affairs of our family, I returned to London, just in time to join with the great congregation in solemnly renewing their covenant with God. This was the first opportunity of the kind that I had ever had. The Lord was graciously present, and it was a time of refreshing to many.

While I was down in Yorkshire, I had frequent opportunities of preaching at Harewood ; and the word of the Lord was attended with a peculiar degree of Divine power, so that many were deeply awakened. But Satan prevailed upon the great man of the place, to give notice to all his tenants, either to quit their farms, or give up Methodism : this frightened many of them. An honest Quaker went to the gentleman, and said, " I always thought thou hadst been a reasonable man." He replied, " Why, Joseph, have you any reason to think the contrary now ? " He said, " Yes ; thou wilt not give thy tenants the same liberty that the king gives his sub-

jects: he gives us liberty of conscience, but thou wilt not give thy tenants that liberty. I would advise thee to let them alone. Thou knowest they are honest, industrious men; and they pay thee thy rent very well. Thou hast no business with their consciences; their consciences are God's: let them go to heaven their own way." He did so, and never troubled them any more to the day of his death.

The remaining part of this year I spent in great comfort and peace with my fellow-labourers. And although we had no very particular revival of the work of God, yet we had a gradual increase, and abundant reason to praise the Lord for ten thousand mercies.

In 1770 our Conference was held in London; when Mr. Wesley drew up those Minutes which afterwards gave such offence. Had they been more seriously considered in the Conference, I am persuaded they would not have been expressed in such an unguarded manner as that in which they appeared. However, the Lord brought great good out of this evil, if so it might be called; for it gave occasion to the publication of those excellent "Checks" of Mr. Fletcher, which have afforded many so much edification.

I was appointed for London again, with those truly excellent men, Messrs. Murlin, Rankin, and Allen. Nothing very remarkable happened in the course of the year, save that the Rev. Mr. Shirley published his Circular Letter, condemning the above Minutes, and inviting all the Gospel ministers to attend our next Conference, and to enter their solemn protest against them. Mr. Charles Wesley, who had always a very warm side towards the clergy, was greatly alarmed, as were all our principal people. I endeavoured, in a meeting of the leaders, to explain

these Minutes to them; by which explanation they were, in general, satisfied. Only they, as well as some others, thought they might have been so expressed as not to have given such offence.

Throughout this year we had great peace and harmony, both among the preachers and the people. And we had the happiness to see the good pleasure of the Lord prosper in our hands, so that, in the conclusion of the year, we had abundant cause to praise the Lord for His manifested goodness.

In 1771 the Conference was held in Bristol. We had reason to expect a warm contest with the Calvinists, on account of the above-mentioned Minutes. A few of them attended, with Mr. Shirley at their head; but they were nothing near so formidable as we expected. They had very little to say in defence of their conduct; and the further discussion of the subjects in debate was, in a great measure, left to that great and good man, Mr. Fletcher, whose extraordinary writings have given abundant satisfaction to most of his readers.

I was stationed this year at Bristol, with my highly-esteemed friend, Mr. Murlin. We entered upon our work with the greatest cheerfulness, the Lord having made us as one soul. I am inclined to think that it has but seldom happened, that two men were more closely united than we were, for many years, even to the day of his death. We were favoured, throughout the year, with much of the Divine Presence, and with the love and esteem of the people; so that our labours were rendered truly delightful, and I hope also useful, through His blessing upon them.

In 1772 our Conference was held in Leeds; so that I had once more a happy opportunity of seeing

my aged mother, and all my dear relations, and had the unspeakable satisfaction to find them all steadily walking in the way of life, and in unity and harmony one with another. I was appointed to return to Bristol along with my faithful friend, Mr. Allen. We were most cordially received by the people, and had the happiness of seeing the work of the Lord prosper in our hands, in different parts of the Circuit.

As I had long been satisfied that a change in my condition in life would be to my advantage, on July 23d, 1773, I was married to Grace Davis, a person of a reputable family in Bristol, who had been savingly converted to God some years before. I entered into this new state of life in the fear of the Lord, and with a single eye to His glory. We had a truly Christian wedding, none being present but pious people; we spent the day in serious conversation, singing, and prayer, and I preached in the evening upon Psalm xxxiv. 22: "The Lord redeemeth the soul of His servants; and none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate." Soon after this I was suddenly seized with an inflammation in my bowels, and was brought to the very gates of death. The pain which attended this disorder was inconceivable; but I was mercifully relieved, by the blessing of God upon the use of proper means. Blessed be the Lord, my strength and my Redeemer!

Universal experience teaches, that every state and station in life hath its particular trials and crosses, and that solid peace and permanent happiness are only to be found in the enjoyment of God. I was now at the height of my wishes as to temporal things, the Lord having given me a pious, sensible, pleasing helpmate; but I still found the truth of that affecting word, "Man is born to trouble, as the



sparks fly upward." My wife became pregnant, and after a hard, tedious, and very painful labour, was delivered of two fine boys. The one died in the birth, the other lived only five weeks, and died also; and what exceedingly increased my affliction, my dear partner continued in an exceedingly weak and deeply-afflicted state, from June to October following, so that her life was in the greatest danger. But the Lord was entreated; He heard the united prayers of His people, and she was raised up again; though her constitution received a wound at that time, which it never recovered. It is impossible for me to describe the painful exercise, both of body and mind, which I then passed through; yet God supported, comforted, and, in due time, delivered me; and I thankfully acknowledge His abundant goodness in this, in the kindness of Christian friends, and in our possessing every temporal advantage that our state and circumstances required.

Our Conference was held in Bristol in 1774, and many of the preachers tenderly sympathized with me in my distress. After all our affairs were properly settled, I was appointed to labour in Leeds, and my faithful friend, Mr. Allen, was appointed to labour with me; but it was not till the 10th of October that my wife could be removed from Bristol, such was her extreme weakness. After a long and very expensive journey, we were, through the good hand of our God upon us, brought safely to Leeds, and my wife gradually recovered strength.

As, through the affliction of my wife, I had been a kind of prisoner for some months past, I felt more sensibly the happiness of being at liberty to labour in the Lord's vineyard. I bless God, I entered upon His work with the greatest cheerfulness, and

earnestly desired to spend and be spent for Him. My dear relations greatly rejoiced to see me once more, and my old friends and acquaintance received me with the utmost affection. We had no particular revival of the work of God in the Circuit, but we enjoyed peace in all our borders, and witnessed a gradual increase in the Societies, as well in number as in grace.

At the Conference in 1775, held in Leeds, I was appointed to continue there; and that truly simple and upright man, Mr. Tennant, who was well received by the people in general, was my colleague.

There was a good work of God in Leeds and in some other places in the Circuit this year; but it was attended with some degree of wildfire, chiefly occasioned by the imprudence of a well-meaning, weak man, who had far more zeal than knowledge. I laboured with all the prudence and tenderness I was master of, to preserve the good, and remove the evil: nevertheless I was accused to Mr. Wesley, as an opposer of the work; but as I had an opportunity to state the case to him, he was fully satisfied. He certainly acted with great prudence in this business, so that the peace of the society was preserved, and we finished the year with comfort to ourselves, and to the satisfaction of the people in general.

In 1776, the Conference being in London, my wife accompanied me thither. We had an agreeable journey, and on the road she had the happiness to see a beloved sister at Ashburn, to whom she was very much united. At this Conference I was appointed for Birstal, along with Mr. John Morgan and Mr. Tennant. My wife was now so far recovered, that she could meet a class, and visit the sick and the poor, which she constantly did, and was

made useful to many. We had great peace in the societies, and the work of the Lord prospered in our hands, and we went on our way rejoicing.

At the Conference in 1777, held in Bristol, I was ordered to return to Birstal; and had with me, as fellow-labourers, Mr. Thomas Johnson, Mr. Joseph Thompson, and Mr. Tennant. This was the most glorious year I ever saw. There was an extraordinary revival of the work of God in Birstal and the neighbourhood. Very many poor, ungodly creatures were savingly converted to God, and made happy in the enjoyment of His love. The people were awakened in various ways, under the word preached, at the prayer and class meetings, and some in their own houses, who refused to come to the preaching. In the course of the year there was an earthquake, and thereby many were alarmed, and constrained to return to the Lord. My wife had full employment among the newly-awakened people. She was excellently qualified to deal with them, and was made very useful to many. The work increased upon our hands to the close of the year; and as we were succeeded by that prudent, zealous, and active servant of God, Mr. Thomas Taylor, who spared no pains to nurse these young disciples of Christ, they were preserved; and not only so, but the revival spread far and wide, so that great numbers were brought to God. In the course of this year, the Lord sent a very destructive fever among the inhabitants of Birstal, and many of these young converts died happy in the love of God.

In 1778 our Conference was held in Leeds, and I was appointed for London, with Mr. Rankin and Mr. Tennant. The night before we set forward on our journey, I had a very narrow escape indeed. A

very small bit of potato stuck in my throat, as I was eating my supper, and I was nearly suffocated thereby. So true it is, "in the midst of life we are in death," and therefore have need to be always ready.

I remained in London two years, having for my fellow-labourers, the latter year, my two good old friends, Messrs. Murlin and Rankin, with me. We had no particular revival of the work of God this year, yet we gained rather than lost ground.

It was during the latter year of my being in London, namely, in June, 1780, that those terrible riots happened. The time was certainly awful, and it was truly wonderful that no more mischief was done. They might have been suppressed in the beginning, with the greatest ease, but were strangely suffered to proceed in their bad work, with little or no interruption. The riots began on the Saturday night, were renewed on Sunday night, and continued till Thursday, when the Government interposed, and very soon restored peace to the city. I never could learn that the Protestant Association had any hand in this business; but it was believed by many that the Papists themselves were active therein. We were in no small danger, being greatly threatened by the Papists, on account of Mr. Wesley having published several letters against Popery at that time. A more awful and distressing sight I never saw, as we were surrounded with fire on every side; Clerkenwell prison, Newgate, the Fleet, the King's Bench prison, together with many other buildings, being all in flames at the same time. But it was truly astonishing, to see how exceeding still and quiet everything was, when once the soldiers began to act. They gained very great credit by their uncommon human-

ity, in treating the rioters (who set them at defiance) with such remarkable patience. Had they not done so, many more of those deluded people would have been killed.

In 1780 our Conference was in Bristol, and I was appointed to labour in that city, along with my faithful friends, Messrs. Rankin and Tennant. We were favoured with great peace and harmony among the people this year, but had no remarkable increase of the work of God. By constantly preaching at five o'clock in the morning, while in London and Bristol, my health was much impaired; I was brought very low, and it seemed as if I should not be able to hold out in the travelling line much longer. This gave me very little concern, as long life never appeared very desirable to me, being well convinced, that to depart, and to be with Christ, is far better; but, by the blessing of God upon the means prescribed by Dr. Hamilton, I was very much strengthened, so that I proceeded in my work. O, may I ever be unfeignedly thankful to the God of my life, for His unmerited mercy and goodness!

In 1781, our Conference being in Leeds, I had the happiness of seeing my dear relations once more, and rejoiced to find them all in the good old way. I was ordered to return to Bristol, along with my dear friend Mr. Murlin and William Moor. The preachers were much united, the people cordially received us, and the good work prospered in our hands.

At the Conference in 1782, held in London, I was appointed for York, along with Barnabas Thomas and Thomas Readshaw, both strangers to me. The weather, during this Conference, was such as had seldom been seen at that time of the year, being

exceeding cold and rainy. It seemed as if the whole harvest would be destroyed. The Lord, however, was entreated, and there was a speedy and a wonderful change in the weather; so that the corn was not near so much damaged as was expected.

Through the mercy and love of God, we came to York in great safety; but my dear wife was afterwards seized with a rheumatic fever, and brought very low. She was, however, mercifully restored; but from that time declined in her health very much, so that she was seldom well for any considerable space of time. My fellow-labourers were neither of them very acceptable to the people; which, being added to the afflictions of my wife, rendered the year very uncomfortable: yet the societies increased in some degree.

In 1783 our Conference was in Bristol, during which Mr. Wesley was dangerously ill, and we were obliged to do a considerable part of our business without him. It was very agreeable to see how deeply the minds of the preachers were affected, and with what unity and harmony everything was settled. Many fervent prayers were offered up to the Lord in Mr. Wesley's behalf: he was greatly supported under his affliction, and was meek, patient, resigned, and as a little child. The Lord was entreated; he was raised up once more to go in and out amongst us, and to regulate our affairs.

I was ordered to return to York, and had with me Mr. Edward Jackson and Mr. Charles Atmore, two faithful men, and very acceptable preachers. We came to York that very night when that extraordinary ball of fire was seen in the firmament all over the kingdom. I had a clear and distinct view of it for a considerable time. It appeared to me in



the form of a very large sugar-loaf of fire, exceedingly bright and luminous, so that I was all surrounded with light for some time. It seemed to pass slowly over my head; and when it was gone a considerable space beyond where I stood, it appeared to divide into many parts, and disappeared.

This was a year of great and sore affliction to me: for, although my fellow-labourers were very acceptable, were kind and affectionate both to me and my wife, and the work of the Lord prospered in our hands; yet soon after we arrived in York, my dear wife began to be so very much afflicted, that she was confined first to her room, and then to her bed, and on the 9th of December quietly breathed out her precious soul into the hands of her Redeemer.\*

I spent the remaining part of this year in as agreeable a way as I could expect, but was often deeply affected in the lively remembrance of those † who were so justly dear to me, and whom the Lord had lately called away. My constant prayer, however, was, that I might be perfectly resigned to His will, and mercifully supported under my distressing trials; and, for ever blessed be His name, my strength was in proportion to my day.

At the conclusion of the year, we found that the Lord had crowned our labours with greater success than we expected, and added a greater number to the societies than we had been acquainted with. This was matter of praise and thanksgiving to us. We had a very solemn and deeply-affecting time when we took our leave of the people in York. Many

\* The reader may see some account of her in the Magazine for February, 1793.

† Mr. Pawson also lost his mother this year, who died at Thorner, January 28th, 1784.

were melted into tears, and I think would not soon forget what they then felt of the power and presence of the Lord. I cannot say that I was sorry to leave York, (though I sincerely loved the people,) for the remembrance of the afflictions I had there met with made me willing to leave the place.

At the Conference held in Leeds in 1784 a greater number of preachers attended than had ever been known to attend a Conference before. This was occasioned by what was commonly called the Conference Deed, which was the unhappy cause of much discontent with some of the preachers and many of the people. For many years it had been very much doubted whether our chapels were properly secured to the Connexion. Various methods were proposed, but none fixed upon till the preceding year, when it was agreed, that this said Deed should be drawn up, and enrolled in His Majesty's High Court of Chancery. The sole design of this was fully to ascertain the meaning of the word "Conference," so that it might be recognised by the law of the land. Accordingly, Mr. Wesley selected an hundred of the preachers, whose names were inserted in this Deed; and these and their successors were meant to constitute the Conference for ever. That the names of some of the old preachers were left out, and those of others, much younger than they, inserted, exceedingly offended the former, and surely not without cause. I do not think, however, that Mr. Wesley had any improper design in this, but that he did it without due consideration, not foreseeing the consequences which would follow. Dr. Coke has been very unjustly blamed, as having selfish designs in procuring this Deed to be made, and influencing the mind of Mr. Wesley in the choice of the preachers;

but I am persuaded that, respecting both the one and the other, he was perfectly innocent.

I was appointed for Manchester, along with my invaluable friend Mr. Murlin, nearly worn out in the service of a good Master, and Mr. John Goodwin, whom I had recommended to the Conference about seventeen years before. Here I met with many of my old friends, and also with several who had been brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God under my ministry, when I was stationed here some years before. Two of these were leaders in the society. This, anyone may suppose, was matter of rejoicing to me ; and I could heartily praise the Lord, who had, in any measure, made me useful in His hand to my fellow-creatures.

Many of the people in Manchester, and in different parts of the Circuit, were exceedingly lively, zealous, and active. And we had much of the power and presence of the Lord with us, so that His blessed work greatly prospered in our hands. Some of the people were in great danger of running into wildness ; but, with all the prudence and tenderness we were masters of, we endeavoured to guard them against everything of the kind, and our labours were not in vain.

The preachers were very much united to each other : we acted by united counsels on all occasions, and cordially rejoiced in each other's success and happiness ; so that the year passed away comfortably, only my late distressing trials had left a soreness upon my mind ; but, after all, we closed this happy and prosperous year with great comfort, as we found that the Lord had added to our number four hundred souls. Bless the Lord, O my soul ; and all that is within me, bless His holy name.

Our Conference was held in London in 1785. When I came thither, I found, to my great surprise, that Mr. Wesley had come to a determination to ordain ministers for Scotland; and that Messrs. Hanby, Joseph Taylor, and myself, were desired to go thither. I had fully expected to return to Manchester, and had not the most distant idea of anything of this kind taking place. I am well assured that this was a matter fully determined upon by Mr. Wesley himself, from the time that he ordained ministers for America; and although Dr. Coke might come into his views, believing that by these means the work of the Lord would prosper the more, yet I am satisfied that it was not through Dr. Coke's influence with Mr. Wesley that these steps were taken, but that the plan was wholly his own.

I had come to a determination to enter into the married state once more, being convinced that this would be the best for me in every respect: and, after serious consideration and much prayer, I had formed a connexion with Mrs. Wren, of York, one that I judged was every way suitable for me; and accordingly we were solemnly married by the Rev. Mr. Richardson, in York, August 12th, 1785. She had been in the Methodist society for some years, and was a most sincere, upright, and lively Christian; and I doubt not but I shall have everlasting cause to praise the Lord for her.

Having spent an agreeable week with our beloved friends at Thorner, we set forward on our journey to Edinburgh; and, through Divine goodness, arrived there in safety, and found a very small but affectionate society. We had an opportunity of receiving the Lord's supper the first Sunday we spent in this

city. There were several ministers present, and the whole service was conducted with great seriousness and solemnity, and in such a way as had a natural tendency to edify the people. We found it a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

I spent this year between Edinburgh and Glasgow, with Mr. Robert Johnson, a deeply pious young man. The Lord gave us favour in the sight of the people, and some degree of success in our labours: but there certainly is a very wide difference between the people in Scotland, and the inhabitants of England. The former have, from their earliest years, been accustomed to hear the leading truths of the Gospel, mixed with Calvinism, constantly preached, so that the truths are become quite familiar to them; but in general they know little or nothing of Christian experience; and general religion, or the life and power of godliness, is in a very low state in that country. I am fully satisfied that it requires a far higher degree of the Divine influence, generally speaking, to awaken a Scotchman out of the dead sleep of sin than an Englishman. So greatly are they bigoted to their own opinions, their mode of church-government, and way of worship, that it does not appear probable that our preachers will ever be of much use to that people; and, in my opinion, except those who are sent to Scotland exceed their own ministers in heart-searching, experimental preaching, closely applying the truth to the consciences of the hearers, they may as well never go thither. The deep concern I felt for the prosperity of the work of God led me to earnest prayer; so that my own soul was kept alive, and I got clearer views of the gracious designs of God, in the Gospel dispensation, than I had ever been favoured with before; so

that, I trust, I shall have everlasting cause to praise the Lord that I ever went to Scotland.

We had orders from Mr. Wesley to form our people into a church, and to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper among them. Many of the people had long desired this, others were very much opposed thereto, so that it was a painful piece of business. Had it been done many years before, there is reason to believe that it would have answered a good end; but now it appeared to me to be too late. We certainly were favoured with much of the Divine presence at our sacramental occasions, and the people were very much refreshed and strengthened; and I believe that, by sitting constantly under our ministry, their judgments were better informed, their understandings more enlightened, and their experience both clearer and deeper than before. But, notwithstanding this, our labours have not succeeded in Scotland, as in other parts of the nation: very far from it.

In my way to the Conference in Bristol, in the summer of 1786, I had the happiness of seeing our dear friends at York and at Thorner, and we once more praised the Lord together.

All our affairs were peaceably settled at this Conference; and it appeared from the accounts brought in, that not less than eight thousand souls were added to the societies the last year. I was ordered to return to Edinburgh with Mr. Charles Atmore, a lively, zealous young man, one every way agreeable to me. We were mercifully preserved on our long journey, and entered upon our work with great cheerfulness. We were favoured with much of the presence of the Lord, both at Glasgow and Edinburgh, but had no considerable number added to the



society. We were enabled to build a large commodious chapel at Glasgow in the course of the year; and when finished we had very large congregations, and there was a good prospect of a prosperous work. In July, 1787, we returned to England, in company with good Mr. Hanby and his family; and, through infinite mercy, were brought in safety among our dear friends at Thorner.

This year our Conference was at Manchester; and after all our affairs were settled, I was appointed for Leeds, along with Mr. John Shaw and Mr. George Snowden, two mild and peaceable men. We were favoured with peace in our societies, had large congregations, the work of the Lord was deepened in the minds of many, and not a few died in great peace, leaving a blessed testimony behind them.

Poor William Shent died this year, a melancholy instance of human instability. After preaching the Gospel to others for forty years, there is too much ground for fear that he died in sin at last. "O for grace to endure to the end!"

At our Conference in London, in 1788, we had great unity and harmony among us, and received good accounts of the work of the Lord from many places. All our affairs, also, were agreeably settled, except that of Dewsbury chapel, which gave great pain to many. I was appointed for Leeds. This was a year of trouble and great perplexity to me; but the Lord brought me through the fiery trial, and did not suffer the flame to kindle upon me: everlasting praise be rendered to His sacred name!

The Conference was held in Leeds in 1789, and I was appointed for Birstal, along with Mr. Joseph Entwisle and Mr. James Ridal, two holy, upright, good-natured men. Had it not been for the sad

effects of the separation in the society at Dewsbury, I believe we should have had a very comfortable year. We acted, however, in unity and harmony one with another; and the good pleasure of the Lord, in some measure, prospered in our hands, though not so much as we desired and expected.

At the next, held in Bristol, I was appointed to return to Birstal, along with Mr. William Percival, and Samuel Taylor, a young man who then first began to travel. This was the last Conference that Mr. Wesley attended: he was now nearly worn out, and his faculties evidently were very much impaired, especially his memory.

I returned to my Circuit, in company with Messrs. Thompson and Atmore. In our first day's journey my mare was taken exceedingly lame on all her feet. Hence I was greatly distressed, not knowing what to do; but as I well knew that it is the Lord who preserveth both man and beast, and that He hath all power, I cried unto Him in my trouble, and He graciously delivered me out of my distress. In a little time the lameness went off, and I was brought in safety to my own peaceful habitation. Blessed be the name of the Lord!

In March this year the Lord called home our spiritual Joshua. We had long expected this sore stroke, so that it was no surprise to us; yet, at the same time, we were filled with deep concern for the prosperity of that work which for so many years he had been the grand instrument, in the hand of God, of supporting.

Our Conference was held in Manchester in 1791. Mr. William Thompson was chosen our president; and, although we had many and great difficulties to encounter, yet, through the infinite mercy and good-

ness of God, we were brought through them all, and the preachers and the people continued united.

I was appointed for Halifax, along with Mr. Joseph Entwisle, who was highly agreeable to me; and, in May following, he was married to Mary Pawson, my brother's daughter, with the hearty consent of her friends. We had much of the Divine presence in our assemblies this year; the work of God was deepened in many minds, others were brought to the saving knowledge of God, and others were truly awakened, so that we had reason to praise the Lord for His manifested goodness.

In the year 1792 the Conference was held in London, and Mr. Mather was chosen president. It was with the utmost difficulty that the peace of the Connexion was preserved; but our disputes were settled, for the present, by a solemn appeal to the lot; and I was ordered to return to Halifax, with that holy, upright young man, Mr. Robert Lomas.

Near the conclusion of this year, a very remarkable revival of the work of God began at a lovefeast, which was held in Greetland chapel; the power of God came down upon the people in a very extraordinary manner, while Mr. Lomas was engaged in prayer; there was a general cry for mercy heard through the whole congregation, and many were brought into the liberty of the children of God. This blessed work spread into the neighbouring societies, and into various Circuits, and great numbers were made the happy partakers of redemption in the blood of Christ.

At our next Conference, held in Leeds, the preachers were pleased to make choice of me for their president. We had several very difficult affairs to settle; but the Lord our God was present with us,

and we were mercifully brought through them. The whole body of the preachers also appeared to be more closely united than they had been. At this Conference we had the most solemn and affecting meeting, when the preachers, twenty-three in number, were admitted into full connexion, I ever saw on that occasion. The Lord was most graciously present in the midst of us, and great was our glorying in the God of our salvation. The people sung the praises of the Lord more like angels than men, and surely it was a heaven upon earth to be there.

I was appointed for Liverpool, with Mr. Adam Clarke, a man of considerable learning, of extraordinary ministerial abilities, and one that I found much union with. Here we had large congregations, and a blessed prospect of much good being done. But, alas! the people were divided in judgment respecting the Church and the sacrament; so that it was with the greatest difficulty we could keep them united in one body. However, notwithstanding all the difficulties we had to encounter, we had a happy and a prosperous year. Many were greatly quickened, comforted, and established in grace, and not a few were added to the society; so that we had abundant cause to praise the Lord for His manifested power and goodness.

In 1794 our Conference was held in Bristol, and Mr. Thomas Hanby was chosen president. Our disputes were very high respecting the sacrament, the trustees of several chapels being much dissatisfied; so that an unhappy division took place in the society in Bristol the next year, on account of these disputes.

I was ordered to return to Liverpool, with my highly-esteemed friend, Mr. Clarke. As it was not

in our power to keep the people in general quiet without the sacrament, we were under the necessity of complying with their wishes. This was certainly attended with an abundant blessing, and great numbers constantly attended that sacred ordinance. Surely the Lord was present in the midst of us, and caused the light of His countenance to shine upon us in a very remarkable manner; but those who were strongly prejudiced in favour of the Church were highly offended, and a considerable number left the society. This occasioned us much uneasiness; but still the work of the Lord prospered in our hands, and we had a considerable addition to the society. Many of the people were remarkably lively, zealous, and active, and their labours were attended with a blessing, so that we had great cause of thankfulness.

This was a year of great strife and contention: circular letters of various kinds were sent throughout the Connexion, and we were in great danger of a general division taking place among us; but God, in great mercy, prevented it.

In 1795 our Conference was held in Manchester, and Mr. Joseph Bradford was chosen president, chiefly because he was judged by many to be of neither party. Our disputes ran very high; but we kept a day of solemn fasting and prayer before the Conference began, which was attended with much of the Divine presence; and, in order to give satisfaction to all parties, as far as possible, a Plan of Pacification was drawn up by nine of the preachers, chosen by ballot from the whole body, and we all sacredly engaged to act agreeably thereto on all occasions; and by this means we were kept united in one body still, and our enemies were disappointed of

their hope. Blessed be the name of the Lord for His abundant mercy !

I was appointed, though much against my will, for London, along with Messrs. Clarke, William West, Walter Griffith, Francis Wrigley, and Richard Reece. There had been much strife and contention there ever since the death of Mr. Wesley, which had greatly hindered the work of God. My good old friend Mr. Mather assisted me in making an agreement with the trustees, and in putting an end to all these unhappy disputes. Peace being restored, our congregations increased, and the work of the Lord, in some measure, prospered in our hands.

In 1796, when our Conference was held in London, Mr. Thomas Taylor was chosen president. We had much difficulty in settling our affairs at this time ; but, through the unmerited mercy of God, we were preserved from dividing : only one of the preachers, who had by his publications occasioned great uneasiness, was excluded the Connexion. My friend Mather and I were requested to go down to Bristol, in order to use our best endeavours to unite the society there ; but, after all we could say or do, we could not prevail upon them to think and let think ; so a considerable division took place.

I was appointed to continue in London, with several of the brethren above-mentioned. The preachers were united, and the unity of the society increased ; a good understanding took place between the trustees and the people in general, so that the work of the Lord began to revive.

At the Conference in Leeds, next year, Dr. Coke was chosen our president : we had likewise a Conference of trustees at the same time. Now a small division took place. The preacher who was excluded



the last year had laboured with his might to bring this about ; and had prevailed upon three more to unite with him, and these divided the societies in several places. We had many painful exercises to pass through this Conference ; but, upon the whole, we had great reason to praise the Lord that our affairs were settled so well, and that no greater division happened among us.

I was appointed for London a third year, and had for my fellow-labourers Messrs. Clarke, Atmore, Marsden, and J. Ashall. Being exceedingly wearied with the business of the Conference, I hastened back to London sooner than I intended ; and, by so doing, greatly disappointed my beloved brother, who earnestly desired me to return to Thorner, after the Conference was over. And had I known that this was the last time I should ever see him, I certainly should have complied with his request. But, alas ! little did I then think that this would be the case. In April following, I had the melancholy news of his sickness and death. I hastened to Thorner ; but they had committed his body to the ground the day before I got there, so that I had not the satisfaction so much as to see his remains. This was exceedingly distressing to me, as I loved him as my own soul.

Notwithstanding all that have been called away by death, there is a goodly number of our family still on earth, and in the way to the kingdom of God. And I greatly rejoice in this, that the preachers are still entertained by my two nephews, at the same houses where they have been cheerfully received from the beginning. My brother's only son, being now comfortably settled in the world, thankfully receives the ministers of Christ, and cheerfully entertains them, in the same house where his father and

grandfather did before him. Blessed be the Lord for this, and for all His manifold and great mercies ! And my sister Tarboton's son entertains them at the same house where his happy father did for many years. Glory to that God who gives both ability and a willing mind ! May they all continue faithful unto death !

Such was the present state of the London society, that it was judged necessary for me to be stationed there a fourth year. This I did not desire ; but, on the contrary, judged it highly expedient for me to be stationed in Leeds, or as near Thorner as might be, that I might assist my nephew in the settlement of his affairs, being only in his nineteenth year. I hope, however, that my appointment was of God, and that it was attended with a blessing to the establishment of peace in that society. In this good work I was assisted by our venerable friend Mr. Mather, who was appointed to labour with me, in London, this year. The people in general seemed to be well satisfied with my return to them, though some were of a different mind. My language was, " Here I am, at the disposal of my Lord and Master. Let Him make what use of me He shall see good. I am His redeemed creature ; and I desire to spend and be spent in His service, and to live wholly to Him, so that at the last I may live with Him for ever."

In the course of this year I printed an affectionate Address to the Junior Preachers. This was well received by the brethren in general, but not by all. A few young men were highly offended with it, and from these I met with unkind treatment ; yet I had the thanks of the Conference for it. If ever my eye was single in any one action of my life, it was so in

printing that Address. My grand design was to preserve the primitive spirit of Methodism in the preachers.

In the year 1799 I was appointed for Leeds, with Mr. W. Blagborne and D. B.

I was now near the close of my sixty-second year. I felt the infirmities of age coming upon me ; but I bless the Lord, I could cheerfully sing, —

“ My remnant of days  
I spend in His praise,  
Who died the whole world to redeem :  
Be they many or few,  
My days are His due,  
And they all are devoted to Him.”

There was a strong inclination in the people to hear the word, and the preachers were well received. We had also great peace and harmony throughout the Circuit, but no considerable increase in the societies.

At the Conference held in London next year, I was appointed to return to Leeds with Mr. Barber and D. B., with whom I did not doubt but I should be very comfortable, considering them as good men, and acceptable preachers. The people were highly satisfied with the appointment, and we had great peace through the year. Our congregations were so large, especially at Leeds, that it was determined to build another chapel.

A little after this Conference, I wrote in my diary as follows :—“ How many of our old preachers has the Lord lately taken to Himself, and very few of them are left behind ! Messrs. Murlin, Roberts, Furze, and Mather are gone ; and there are now only two in the Connexion who have travelled longer than I have done, namely, T. Taylor and Isaac

Brown. I could not but take notice, at our late Conference, that there were only two brethren present who were at the Conference in 1762. Such a change do a few years produce! How deeply affecting are the words of the prophet: 'Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?' O no! The wisest, the best, and the most useful of men must die to be no more with the church on earth! But, O! how wonderful is the wisdom, and how astonishing the goodness, of God! When He calls one away, how strangely does He fill up his place in the church and in the world with another! so that the man, however great or good, however useful or holy, he may have been, is scarcely missed by the survivors, except it be by those in his own family, and a few particular friends. And even with these time effaces those tender impressions from the mind; so that, as our place knows us no more, so our best friends find they can be happy without us; and seldom, after a few months or years have elapsed, do they so much as speak or even think of us.

"I am now, through the infinite mercy of God, in good health, though in the sixty-third year of my age. I am comfortably settled with good, friendly, useful preachers, among an affectionate people, and in the enjoyment of every temporal blessing. O that I may be sincerely thankful to the Giver of all my mercies, diligent, zealous, and useful in the hand of the Lord; and may I stand in continual readiness to meet whatever change may take place in the course of this year, whether pain or ease, sickness or health, life or death. Amen."

At the Conference held in Leeds, 1801, I was appointed for Birstal. I looked upon it as a privi-

lege to go to so quiet a corner as I judged that Circuit to be.

Our Conference concluded in a very Christian-like manner, with serious, fervent, solemn prayer ; so that they who stayed till the conclusion of it were not only deeply affected, but parted one from another as Christian ministers ought to do on such occasions, not knowing that they should meet again in the present world.

I have now attended forty successive Conferences, which is more than any preacher now living can say, besides myself. How many more I may be permitted to attend, God knoweth. This I leave with Him, with whom are the issues of life and death. My times are in Thy hand, O Lord. Many of our preachers have been called away in the course of the last year ; and how many, or who, may finish their course this year, no one can tell but He in whose hand our life is. May He fully prepare those whom He intends to call, and may I stand in continual readiness to meet that most important event ! May it ever be the language of my heart, " Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen and Amen !

We had great peace this year, but no considerable increase in the societies. Many of the people seemed to enjoy a good degree of inward life, were very zealous and active, and prayed most fervently and constantly for the preachers, and the prosperity of the work of God. We were favoured with much of the Divine presence in our meetings ; and I do not remember ever to have found greater enlargement in prayer than this year. Blessed be the Lord for His abundant goodness and mercy.

I have now travelled forty years; and have not, in all that time, been confined by affliction of any kind forty days, but have been favoured with almost uninterrupted health and strength. Through the mercy of God, I endure to this day. I may stand astonished when I consider how I have been preserved from what are commonly called "misfortunes" all my life long; for though I have, many times, fallen from horses, and once was overturned in a coach, I never had a bone broken or dislocated. Praise the Lord!

By the mercy of God, I was brought to the conclusion of the year in peace. I earnestly wished to be excused from attending the Conference in July, on account of my age, and the great distance, it being held in Bristol this year. But the brethren would not excuse me. I set off, in company with Mr. J. Barber, a man that I greatly esteem. We spent a night with our friends in Sheffield, and I preached to them in the evening, with some degree of liberty. We spent the Sunday very comfortably in Birmingham. At Bristol I met with many old and dear friends, who appeared very glad to see me once more, and treated me with great kindness and affection indeed. It brought to my remembrance old times, when, being stationed among them, we took sweet counsel together, and were edified by the mutual faith of one another. A great number of preachers attended this Conference, many of whom I did not know. My mind was much affected in seeing the change which a few years had brought about, and how few old men were amongst us.

We had many useful sermons preached during the Conference, had in general large congregations, and



many fervent prayers were offered to God for the prosperity of His work, and the enlargement of His kingdom.

I returned again to Birstal, and met with a cordial reception. May it be for the honour of God, and our mutual happiness! Here I am, in this obscure corner, in my own little, quiet, peaceful habitation, where, I praise the Lord, I live in love and peace with everyone, and enjoy every temporal blessing I can desire. What can I wish for more, but an increase of the life of God in my own soul, and that His good pleasure may prosper in my hand? How little did I think, when I entered upon this work, that my life would be lengthened out for forty years! Yet such is the goodness of God, that, after these many years are expired and gone, here I am, a monument of His mercy, a witness of Divine love, and an heir of everlasting life! Perhaps, this will be the last year of my life, and the Lord may have sent me here to finish my course among my old friends, and near my native place, where I wish to rest with my fathers. If so, Thy will be done. O Lord, make me fully ready, and take me home when Thou wilt. Amen.

“At the Conference held in Manchester in 1803, it was matter of great thankfulness to me, to find that there had been an increase of numbers in our Connexion the preceding year; and I trust, also, an increase of solid piety. It appeared to me, that the preachers, and people in general, were in as good a state as I had ever known them to be in. At this Conference I was appointed for the Bristol Circuit. I think I never at any time more fully committed myself into the hands of the Lord, in order that He might dispose of me as He pleased, than I did at this

time. I am sure it was the prayer of my soul, 'Lord, send me where Thou wilt: only let Thy presence go with me, and I am content.' My dear partner and I paid a visit to our relations at Thorner, for a few days; and I opened the new chapel, which they had just built. We had a large congregation, and a lovefeast afterwards. The Lord was present, His people were edified, and several declared, with freedom, what their gracious God had done for their souls.

"I found the congregations in Bristol much larger than I expected. Many of the people appeared to be deeply pious, and to live in expectation of seeing a revival of the work of God, for which they prayed earnestly, knowing that the help that is done upon earth, the Lord doeth it Himself."

November 30th.—This year, in a letter to Mr. Benson, speaking of some unprofitable speculations which some people were agitating in meetings, held for that purpose, he says, "I sincerely wish I may, to my latest breath, be like-minded with him who said, 'I am determined to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.' I am going out of the world, and I most heartily praise God for it. If I live till next Wednesday, I shall enter upon my sixty-seventh year. Praise the Lord, O my soul, for innumerable mercies." He proceeds in his diary:—

August 24th, 1804.—"I have spent one year at Bristol, in great peace, unity, and harmony; and that both with the people and my fellow-labourers. And the work of the Lord hath, in some measure, prospered in our hands. I am now entering upon a second year in that Circuit, and the forty-third year of my itinerant life. The Searcher of all hearts knows that I would serve Him and my generation to

the utmost. Lord, here I am, Thy willing servant: do with me what Thou wilt; employ me where and as Thou wilt; only be Thou present with me, and right precious to me. Let Thy abundant blessing attend me, and make my way prosperous. If this be the last year of my life, as it probably may, my prayer to the Lord is, that it may be the happiest and the most useful year I have spent, and that I may be fully ready, whensoever or wheresoever the Lord may call me! O my God, let me finish well at last. Be present with me, O my gracious Redeemer, in my latest moments, and let me die on Thy loving bosom; let me fall asleep in Thy gracious arms, and let me live with Thee for ever."

June 21st.—This year he writes as follows, to Mr. Benson:—"I have been earnestly pressed to visit Cornwall this spring; but I have refused. I am too old, and too insignificant, to go out on such popular visits. I wish to retire into some quiet corner, where I may live and die in peace. We are, through mercy, tolerably well at present, blessed be the Lord. Yet we feel the infirmities of age creeping upon us, in some instances, which few know but ourselves. Yet good is the will of the Lord. Time will bring death along with him, ere it be long. But, what then? seeing that to die is inconceivable gain!"

"At the Sheffield Conference, in 1805," says he, in his diary, "I was appointed for Wakefield. This is very agreeable to me, as I am growing old. If it should please God to call me hence the present or next year, my friends would be at little trouble or expense in taking me to Thorner, where I might sleep with my fathers, which I greatly desire, if so the Lord should please to favour me. I am now in my sixty-eighth year, and various bodily infirmities

are come upon me ; but, through the abundant mercy of God, I am able to fulfil the duties of my station at present. How long that may be the case with me, God only knows ; but I am in His hand, and at His disposal : let Him do with me as seemeth Him good. I cannot choose, and He cannot err. He is infinitely wise in all His ways, and holy in all His works. I thankfully acknowledge, that my life has been a life of mercy and love. From my earliest years, the goodness of God hath abounded towards me. The Lord has been the guide of my youth, the strength and stay, the comfort and happiness, of my riper years ; and now, when I am old and grey-headed, He does not, and I trust He will not, forsake me. I can say, on good and scriptural grounds, ‘My heart is fixed, O God ! my heart is fixed ; I will sing and give praise.’ And God Himself hath said, ‘I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.’ Having this blessed promise to rely upon, may I not, in the deepest humility and self-abasement, say, ‘Lord, I never will leave nor forsake Thee?’ And why should I? Where and to whom can I go? I know, by happy and long experience, that He hath the words of eternal life. My mind has often been much affected by the words of our blessed Lord to His disciples, before His agony in the garden, ‘Ye are they who have continued with Me in My temptation.’ They had not turned their backs on Him, as too many had done. O that I, like them, may continue with my gracious Lord in His temptation ; may abide steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, let what will of storms and tempests arise, till He shall kindly sign my soul’s release, and say unto me, ‘Come up hither, and take thy seat with Me.’ Amen.

‘O! would He more of heaven bestow,  
 And let the vessel break;  
 And let my ransom’d spirit go,  
 To grasp the God I seek!

‘In rapturous awe on Him to gaze,  
 Who bought the sight for me;  
 And shout and wonder at His grace,  
 To all eternity.’”

The above paragraph is without date; but it seems to have been written either during or immediately after the Sheffield Conference, in 1805; and is the last that he wrote in his diary. October 21st, that year, he wrote to Mr. Benson as follows:—"My complaint increases upon me, so that it is a doubt with me, whether I shall hold out to the end of the year. But, as Mr. Wesley used to observe, I am in good hands, and hope I can say, 'The will of the Lord be done.' I have been greatly favoured for many years with a large share of health, and have infinite cause to be thankful. I have not brought my present complaint upon myself; therefore I am satisfied that the Lord should deal with me as He shall see good."

January 18th, 1806, he writes again to Mr. Benson, to the same purpose: "I am fully satisfied that, if I hold out till the next Conference, it will be all I can possibly do. But it is matter of serious doubt with me, whether I can struggle on till then. Was it not that this poor Circuit has been so peculiarly unfortunate, respecting the preachers appointed to it for the present year,\* I certainly should give up without delay. But as we are circumstanced, I would gladly

\* Mr. Grant, the only fellow-labourer of Mr. Pawson, in the Wakefield Circuit, had left it immediately after Conference, through indisposition.

keep my place to the end of the year, if the Lord shall please to enable me so to do. I praise Him, I am perfectly satisfied with His dispensations toward me. I am in His all-wise and infinitely-gracious hand, and am satisfied that all things shall work together for my good.

“I have been in deep waters for some time past. My dear partner in life has been brought to the gates of the grave. But the Lord has been very gracious unto me : He has heard the prayer of His people, for ever blessed be His name ! and through His unbounded goodness and infinite mercy, she is now in a very hopeful way ; and I trust, through the goodness of God, will be perfectly restored. I hope I shall never forget this singular mercy, but retain a thankful remembrance of it as long as I live.

“Last Wednesday I attended the funeral of my sister Pawson, my late brother’s widow. She was suddenly struck with what was thought a fit of the palsy, and died in great peace in a few days. So you see the Lord is visiting us with breach upon breach, and loudly calling upon me, at least, to be fully ready for the great and very important change. Long life or old age never appeared very desirable to me at any time, and much less so now than ever. The times appear exceedingly gloomy at present ; and what the consequence will be, as to our beloved country, is only known to the wise Disposer of all events. It seems as if nothing could withstand that dreadful scourge. May our merciful God interpose in our behalf ! Amen !”

He wrote again to Mr. Benson, January 25th, when, speaking of some steps he was taking relative to the work of God in a neighbouring Circuit, he says, “You see I am acting as if nothing were the



matter with me, and yet I was obliged to rise out of bed last night no less than twelve times. I have had the advice of several eminent physicians, but nothing that I have yet taken has done me the least good. I believe the grave must be my physician. Glad am I that my time is so near a close."

We conceive that an extract from four or five of his letters to some other friends, written about the same time, will be acceptable to the reader. In one, soon after the Conference, (1805,) he writes thus to Mr. Rankin :—"O that the spirit of faith and prayer, the spirit of power and love, may ever rest upon us! Hitherto the Lord hath helped us. O, what a mercy of mercies is this, that we can still say, to the honour of God, that, having obtained help of Him, we continue to the present day! By His almighty arm, and by the comfort and help of His blessed Spirit, we have been preserved from a thousand dangers, and have been Divinely supported, as well as comforted, under all our various crosses and afflictions. We may therefore well say, 'The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord.' We feel that age brings its infirmities along with it, and death will come by and by. Well, let it come: I trust we shall be found ready; and then what a change! what a prospect! what a heaven! what solid peace and permanent happiness! Who can fully comprehend it?"

In one, in October, he says, "I bless the Lord, I am in His gracious hands, and have the satisfaction to be fully assured, that He doeth all things well. I wish to be wholly resigned to His will, whose I am, and whom I sincerely desire to serve."

In another, in December, he adds thus :—"I bless the Lord, my mind is perfectly easy; and I praise

God that I know and feel I am in good hands. The Lord has been wonderfully kind to me, and that for many years: shall I then complain? O no! It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good."

In one of his last, he again says, "What changes have you and I lived to see! How many of our fellow-labourers have gone before us! Where are the Hoppers, the Cownleys, the Jacos, the Murlins, the Hanbys, the Mathers, the Manners, &c., &c., &c., and, above all, our venerable fathers in the Gospel? They are all gone hence, and we see them no more. The time is drawing very near, when we shall be called to follow them through the awful valley; but, I trust, at the same time, we also shall mount up to the throne of God. There we shall unite, with all our beloved friends, in one eternal song of praise unto Him who loved us, and has already washed us from our sins in His own most precious blood! Welcome, thrice welcome, that happy day, when this clay tabernacle shall be taken down, and laid in the dust. I can cheerfully say, with our poet,—

‘What is there here to court my stay,  
Or hold me back from home;  
When angels beckon me away,  
And Jesus bids me come?’

"My old and long-tried friend, what a prospect will soon, yea, very soon, open to you and me! I can hardly forbear saying, Lord, hasten the happy time! O, bring near the joyful hour! I think I shall, perhaps, get the start of you; and should it be so, (if the Lord permit it,) I will gladly give you the meeting, and show you the way to the celestial regions of bliss and immortal glory."

He wrote as follows to Mr. Charles Atmore:—

“WAKEFIELD, *February 7th*, 1806.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“YOUR letter came to hand this morning. I should not have written again so soon, only I think, if I do not, I shall not be able to write at all. This, I am inclined to think, will be the last letter you will receive from me; as I look upon myself to be upon the very brink of death. I preached last Monday night at Wakefield, and I am led to believe that I never shall appear in the pulpit any more. My painful, disagreeable complaint grows upon me very fast. I have been obliged to rise twenty, thirty, yea, forty times in a night. I have consulted many of those who are highly esteemed in the medical line; but no one has been of any use to me yet; nor do I expect to find any help from them. The Lord Himself must be my Physician: I am in His blessed hands, and am perfectly satisfied. I trust I can say, from the ground of my heart, ‘Father, Thy will be done.’ Only let patience have its perfect work. Life is not at all desirable to me. No, no. To be dissolved, and to be with Christ, is far, yea, infinitely better.

“I now bid you a final adieu; and can only say, with Moses, ‘The Lord bless you, and keep you. The Lord lift up upon you the light of His countenance. The Lord make His face to shine upon you, and give you peace.’ So prays your dying friend.”

The following letter was addressed to Mr. Entwisle:—

“ WAKEFIELD, *February 23d*, 1806.

“ O MY BELOVED JOSEPH,

“ WHERE shall I begin to tell of the loving-kindness of an infinitely kind and gracious God, extended to a poor, weak, and helpless worm ?

‘ O for this love, let rocks and hills  
Their endless silence break,  
And all harmonious (mine in particular) human tongues  
The Saviour’s praises speak ! ’

O yes, my Saviour’s praises speak !

“ The pain and sickness I have been called to pass through, I cannot describe. Human language falls far too short. But the sweet peace, the heavenly tranquillity, the holy, delightful, and heavenly joy, which my precious Saviour communicated to my soul, very far exceeds all description. This day fortnight, O with what rapture, with what supreme delight, did I view my heavenly inheritance ! My soul, mounted up to the throne of God, my altogether lovely Saviour, the kingdom of immortal glory. The holy, happy spirits I saw worshipping at Emmanuel’s feet, all ready to bid me welcome. In short, heaven itself surrounded me on every side. My beloved brother seemed standing at my bed’s foot ! Nothing but my poor, weeping wife, and a poor thin veil of flesh and blood, seemed to stand in my way. No ; glory to God in the highest ! No clouds, no doubts, no fears. No ; all was quietness, peace, and assurance for ever.

“ Last Sunday I was very ill indeed. I said to the doctor, ‘ You know, sir, that from the beginning I have had no wish to recover ; and now I have no hope. I believe I shall die ; and it would give me inexpressible pleasure to hear you say, that you have

none; (that is, no hope;) and I believe you have very little hope, or rather none at all, concerning me.' But since then I have gained a little strength. But what shall I say? I am as weak as sickness with violent retching can make me.

"This is perhaps the last letter I shall ever write. Well, be it so; I can hold out no more. I am quite done for. Ten thousand blessings attend you and yours. Amen.

"I am your affectionate uncle,

"J. PAWSON."

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#### ACCOUNT OF MR. PAWSON'S DEATH.

THE last sermon he preached was in Wakefield, on the 3d of February, 1806, from Mark iii. 35: "Whosoever shall do the will of God," &c. He had for some time complained of indisposition, and now expressed himself as incapable of further labour in the ministry. On Thursday, the 6th of February, he was for the first time confined to his room, being now attacked by an inflammation in his bowels. From this period, he appeared to be fast approaching to the borders of the grave. This was to him a source of consolation, and he frequently declared, that when his pain was most acute, his confidence in God was strongest.

On Tuesday, the 25th, to the astonishment of all, he came down stairs without assistance, and, with uncommon earnestness, exhorted those ministers who were present to insist especially on the necessity of enjoying the witness of the Spirit, and holiness of heart; and then declared, that the only foundation

of his hope was the infinite merits of the Lord Jesus. On the same day he said to those around, "All will be well soon. I can speak of my funeral as cheerfully as of my wedding." In a conversation he had with a friend, on the necessity of doing all things to the glory of God, he declared that he had never purchased a single article since his conversion, but with an eye to eternity, and said, "I have nothing to do: all is ready."

Wednesday, 26th.—Having, in the year 1800, under an apprehension that his time would not be long on earth, drawn up a letter of advice to his brethren, to be communicated to them after his death, he, on this day, with great solemnity, put it into the hands of a friend, with an earnest request that it might be read to them at the ensuing Conference, as containing his dying testimony and advice.\* And, when several friends were present, after expressing, in the most elevated and forcible language, his glorious prospects into eternity, he began to pray with the utmost fervency; for the Conference, that they might abide by their original doctrines; also, in a most affecting manner, for his wife, that the Lord would enable her cheerfully to resign him into His hands, and support her through this trying scene; and then for every individual present. Though exceedingly weak, he, after this, at the request of Mrs. Pawson, with perfect recollection and presence of mind, baptized a child belonging to a particular friend: this was an affecting sight, and a most solemn season.

On Thursday, the 27th, to Mr. Smith, from Birstal, he said, "Give my love to the congregation, and

\* We shall subjoin to this narrative an extract of this letter.



tell them I am going to my precious Saviour; the heaven of heavens is open to my view; I have nothing on my mind; I have nothing to do but die. I have long been sailing to this fair haven. Sometimes the seas have been rough and tempestuous: Satan has often tried to raise a storm, if possible, to upset my little bark; but this he could not effect. No, no; now Satan hath no business with me; he appears to have quitted the field, and given it up as a lost case." At another time he spoke to this effect:—"All the powers of darkness will never be able to extinguish the flame of Divine love that burns within." Soon afterwards he said, "It is enough; Christ died for me; I am mounting up to the throne of God." Then he broke out into the most rapturous strains of praise; and, clasping his hands, said, "I know I am dying; but my death-bed is a bed of roses; I have no thorns planted upon my dying pillow."

On Friday, 28th, being told that he would fatigue himself by speaking too much, he exclaimed, "I spend my breath as freely as I received it." One of his friends reminding him, he had not now to seek the Lord, he replied, "No: I have not to seek the Lord, nor has He to seek me." Some wine and water being offered to him, he (though scarcely able) took it into his own hand, and then, in the most solemn and affecting manner, administered to himself the sacrament. This was indeed a blessed and profitable season to all present.

On Saturday, March 1st, about one o'clock in the morning, he spoke of death with the greatest cheerfulness, and, feeling at his pulse, wondered that he should delay his coming:—"I have no dread; all is prepared; death is welcome." A few hours after

this, he again committed his wife into the hands of God, telling her she would soon follow, and that the Lord would be her refuge and strength. Feeling himself exceedingly weak, he said, "I am on the verge of eternity;" and with his utmost remaining strength exclaimed, "Victory, victory, victory, through the blood of the Lamb! Let my soul now take its everlasting flight." After this he sung the following verse from one of his favourite hymns:—

"O! could we but our doubts remove,  
Those gloomy doubts that rise;  
And see the Canaan that we love,  
With unclouded eyes!"

"Doubts, gloomy doubts! where are they? I know nothing of gloomy doubts; I have none. Where are they gone?" A friend replied, "I suppose they are fallen at the foot of the cross, where Bunyan's Pilgrim lost his burden." "O!" said our reverend father, "but I am now upon the Delectable Mountains; and with the Shepherd's spying-glass I view the heavenly country." At this time there appeared a favourable change in his complaint, which continued about ten days; during which period, through extreme debility, he was incapable of speaking much; but what he said was strongly expressive of his happy state. "I have," said he, at one time, "neither pain, sickness, sorrow, nor a wish to live or die. All is well.

"My Jesus to know, and feel His blood flow,  
'Tis life everlasting, 'tis heaven below."

Yes, heaven already is begun, everlasting life is won, is won, is won! I die a safe, easy, happy death. Thou, my God, art present; I know, I feel Thou art. Precious Jesus! Glory, glory be to God!"

Sunday, 16th.—Having passed through a very painful night, he said he thought two more such would carry him off; but added, “All is well; my life is hid with Christ in God: and you, my dear partner, will soon follow me.” He then, with peculiar energy, spoke the following lines:—

“Trembling, hoping, ling’ring, flying,  
O the pain, the bliss of dying!”

Monday, 17th.—Being asked if he wanted anything, he replied, “I want nothing but my blessed Jesus, and death. But I have Him now: thanks be to God, Christ is mine. I am dying, but I shall live for ever. Christ is all in all to me: death is indeed desirable; but all the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come.” One present said, “You will have a blessed change.” “Yes,” said he, “I know I shall.” To one who came to see him, he said, “My kind friend, I am drawing fast to a conclusion. O, my Jesus, it is all light and glory! I am completely happy; completely happy.”

On Tuesday, the 18th, suffering much from difficulty of breathing, he said, “Dying work is hard work: but now my strength fails, God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever; yes, for ever and ever. Christ is my Saviour, my All. Help me to render unto Thee the praise so justly due to Thine excellent name for the support I feel. Thou dost not suffer me to faint: no;

‘From Zion’s top the breezes blow,  
Refreshing all the vales below.’”

About eleven o’clock at night he began to be much worse; respiration was exceedingly difficult, and he appeared to suffer much pain.

Early on Wednesday morning, he said to his

nephew and fellow-labourer, who sat by his bed-side, "I feel I am dying, but must get up and die in my chair." Soon after he was seated, he said, "Now kneel down, both of you, and pray that I may be released, if it be the will of God." After they had prayed, he took hold of the hand of each of them, and gave them his dying blessing. He then lifted up his hands and eyes to heaven, and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Soon after he was again put into bed, and said, "My God! my God! my God!" These were the last words he distinctly uttered. He was now incapable of speaking, and sunk very fast, but was perfectly sensible to the end. He died about twenty minutes past nine o'clock in the morning, apparently without any struggle or pain, in the sixty-ninth year of his age, and forty-fourth of his ministry; leaving a most glorious testimony, that he was gone to be for ever with the Lord.

Mr. Benson preached a funeral sermon on the death of Mr. Pawson, in the City-Road chapel, London; and, preparatory to that service, he received the following letter from their mutual friend Mr. Rankin:—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"LOVE to the memory of our (once) much-beloved but now deceased friend and brother, Pawson, constrains me to give you a few particulars concerning him, which may be of use to the living, who hear you this day. In the year 1762 I rode from the Sevenoaks Circuit, in order to attend the Conference, then held in Leeds. There it was I first saw my much-esteemed and greatly-beloved friend: at that Conference he came out on trial; and with

what general acceptance, as well as usefulness, he has laboured in his Lord's vineyard, from that period till his death, his brethren in the ministry, and thousands besides, are real witnesses. During the first seven years of his ministerial labours, as we were stationed in different parts of the kingdom, we only had the pleasure of seeing one another when we met at our Conferences. In the years '69 and '70 we were both stationed in London; and then commenced that union of hearts and labours that will only have its consummation in a glorious eternity. We endeavoured to strengthen each other's hands in the Lord; as also to exert all our little abilities in that work in which we were mutually engaged. When I returned from America in the year 1778, we were both stationed in London for two years again. The seasons we enjoyed of mutual intercourse one with another, as well as in our united labours, to promote the glory of God, and the happiness of our fellow-creatures, will never be obliterated from my mind. We not only freely conferred together, but often poured out our souls to God for each other's happiness, as also for the blessed work in which we were engaged. Those seasons of happy intercourse with God and each other are deeply engraven on my heart; and, I doubt not, are recorded in the annals above. In the year 1780 we were stationed together in Bristol. This was a year of much real happiness to both our souls; and our labours were not in vain in the Lord. The seasons for spiritual conversation and prayer were neither forgotten nor omitted. The return of that holy and venerable servant of God, the Rev. Mr. Fletcher, from the Continent, in the spring, 1781, was rendered a peculiar blessing to my deceased friend, as well as to myself. While he was

with us in Bristol, his prayers, preaching, and conversation were indeed a Divine stimulus to both our souls. We often spoke of them with pleasure; and the salutary effects which they left on both our minds were beyond the power of words to express. At the ensuing Conference my esteemed friend was separated from me; but the frequent letters which passed between us served to keep alive that sincere regard and mutual affection which we felt for each other. We rejoiced in each other's happiness, and in the prosperity of the work of God. I found him the same steady and invariable friend at all times, and in every place, wherever he was called to labour. Neither time, place, nor distance made the least alteration. Indeed, the steadiness of his friendship was such, that, except our Father in the Gospel, I scarce ever knew his equal. When he once sincerely loved his friend, it was not a little that would make him change his esteem, confidence, or affection. He was not one of those 'who wonder at the strange man's face, as one they never had seen before.' I shall never forget that sincere mark of his love which he showed to me three years ago last June. As soon as he heard I was come to Leeds, (to which place I then paid a visit,) he walked from Birstal to give me the meeting. The happiness of the interview was mutual and pleasing on both sides. We had many profitable hours together during the six weeks I spent in Leeds and its vicinity. There was another most pleasing trait in his character. He was a man of peace and love. This was manifested on a variety of occasions, the particulars of which need not now be detailed. The God of peace and love (with the word of Christ) dwelt richly in his heart; and from this permanent fountain the



streams flowed. The four last years he was stationed in London were years of unspeakable pleasure to my mind. Many, very many, were the hours in which we took sweet counsel together, how to promote each other's progress in the Divine life; as also to render each other still more useful to the souls of our fellow-creatures. The integrity and uprightness of mind which I always discovered in my deceased friend, so endeared him to me, that, while memory remains, his loved memorial will never depart from my heart. He never spared himself in his public labours for the good of souls. He was long blessed with health and strength, and he laid it out to promote the best of causes,—the glory of God in the salvation of men.

“He loved the doctrines and discipline of the people called Methodists, and that from his very heart. It was his meat and drink to enforce both the one and the other. And in the prosperity of Zion he always greatly and sincerely rejoiced; and he felt keenly, and mourned deeply, for everything that had a tendency to the contrary. In short, his whole soul was in the work of his adorable Saviour; and such he lived, and such he died.

“THOMAS RANKIN.”

We insert here an extract of a letter of Mr. Pawson, addressed to the Conference, and containing his dying advice to his brethren:—

“WAKEFIELD, *February 26th*, 1806.

“VERY DEAR AND HIGHLY-ESTEEMED BRETHREN,

“EVER since I have known you, I have most sincerely and ardently loved you; and never had a thought, or a wish, but to live, and labour, and die

with you. The Searcher of all hearts knoweth that I have rejoiced in your prosperity, and have mourned over you when oppressed, or when it has not been well with any of you. But I am now about to leave you for a season, and am going to unite with my fathers and brethren who have gone before me, to that city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. I die in the full assurance of a hope of being inconceivably and eternally happy with God my Saviour, and with all His redeemed people. I joyfully confess that I have not followed a cunningly-devised fable. I have not served God in vain. He hath not been to me 'as waters that fail,' but rather 'as a place of broad rivers and streams ;' so that I can declare, upon good ground, that not 'one thing hath failed of all that He hath promised ;' but 'goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life,' and I know that I shall 'dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.'

"I bless the Lord, I can declare in His presence, that in all my doings among you, my eye has been single. However I may have been mistaken, I have simply intended the glory of God, and the prosperity of His work. Therefore my mind is perfectly at ease respecting the part I have acted.

"May I be permitted, as a dying man, to give you a little advice? which I hope, when I am no more, you will seriously think of:—

"1. Take great care that you all constantly maintain the primitive Methodist spirit. Be serious, spiritual, and heavenly-minded. Be lively, zealous, and active in the service of God. Be crucified to this vain world, and filled with that Holy Spirit which raises the soul from earth to heaven. You are in great danger of conforming to the world in your

dress, in your manners, and in your spirit and temper of mind. O, watch and pray against this deadly evil; and let not your wives and children fall into this snare of the devil.

“2. Take care that you constantly, clearly, fully, and pointedly preach the good old Methodist doctrines. They are the very truth, as revealed in God’s own book. Never lose sight of ‘the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of sins;’ and the full renewal of the soul in righteousness and true holiness. Constantly preach Christ, in all the riches of His grace, and offer in His name a present, free, and full salvation,—a salvation from the guilt, the power, and the very being of sin.

“3. Abide by every branch of our discipline. You have known the blessing which has attended it; but never try to make the door of the church narrower than God hath made the door of heaven. Never, no, never while you live, give the least countenance to anything like a persecuting spirit.

“4. Take all possible care to maintain a lively, spiritual, heart-searching ministry. To this end I entreat you, by the mercies of God in Christ Jesus, never, no, never try to make ministers by substituting learning, or anything else, in the room of the call of God, and those spiritual gifts and graces which He always did and always will bestow upon those whom He sends to labour in His vineyard. The great Head of the church will always take care to provide a sufficient number of faithful men to publish the glad tidings of salvation in His name. It is your duty to pray that the Lord of the harvest may send forth labourers; but never try to make them: He will do that Himself. Religion has been utterly ruined in almost every particular body of Christians

by this deadly evil ; the establishing a learned, instead of a lively spiritual, ministry.

“ 5. Be exceedingly careful in receiving candidates for the ministry. On no account whatsoever admit any but what you have sufficient reason to believe are soundly converted to God, are zealous for His glory, and who only wish to spend and be spent in His work. If ever the life and power of godliness begin to decay among the Methodists, look well to yourselves ; for the first cause will be with the preachers. As long as you are truly devoted to God, and faithfully preach His word, a blessing must attend it, and the work of the Lord will prosper in your hands. But if you do not live in the Spirit, and copy the example of your Lord, you have no right to expect that He will cause His blessing to attend your labours ; and your spirit will but too soon be observed by the people, and they will lose the life and power of godliness, as well as yourselves.

“ Thus I have freely communicated my dying thoughts to you, my honoured and dear brethren ; and have no more to say, but only to pray that the God of all grace may be ever present with you all, and that He may crown your labours with abundant success, till each of you shall be called to receive your glorious reward in the kingdom of your Father above.

“ I am, while living, and shall not be less so when dead,

“ Your most sincere and affectionate brother,  
and cordial friend.”

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*Some additional Traits of the Character of the late  
Mr. Pawson. By Mr. Adam Clarke.*

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "METHODIST MAGAZINE."

MUCH respect has been already paid to the memory of our lately-deceased venerable friend Mr. John Pawson, both from the pulpit and the press; and most circumstances of his life and death are now well known to our congregations in general. But as several of those traits of character which could only appear in very private life, and would be remarked by those alone who were most intimately acquainted with him, have not been distinctly noticed either in the account of his life, or the sermons which have been published on the occasion of his death, permit me to bring a few additional circumstances before your numerous readers, that the man and his communication may be more distinctly observed when exhibited in those points of light in which he is most interesting, and his example most impressive and edifying.

In the years 1793, 1794, 1795, 1796, and 1797, I travelled with Mr. Pawson; the two former in Liverpool, the three latter in London. When in Liverpool we lived almost next door to each other, and were frequently together morning, noon, and night; for the society being in a disturbed state, we were obliged to unite our counsels and exertions, at all times, to prevent schisms and to promote peace. It was in these troublous times that I had the opportunity of seeing Mr. Pawson in every point of view, and of estimating his character; and from my own observations, made principally at that time,

the following memoranda are chiefly drawn, which, the reader will be pleased to understand, have all been confirmed by the testimony of his pious widow.

1. Mr. Pawson's deportment was at all times grave, dignified, and recollected. He had not a variety of forms for different occasions; his character was fixed and permanent, so that he was the same in spirit, whether in the pulpit, in his family, or among his friends.

2. Sacred things were ever treated by him with that honour and reverence which are their peculiar due. He highly esteemed every ordinance of God, and recommended each by his warmest exhortations and unvarying practice. In social and family prayer, his manner was remarkably animated and devout; and in his addresses to his Maker, that intimate acquaintance which he had with Him was easily discernible.

3. Family prayer he never omitted, nor slightly passed over, however fatigued; judging that nothing but the overwhelming power of disease could be a sufficient excuse for the neglect of this most important duty. His manner in prayer, whether in private or public, was worthy of observation. He always kneeled: standing he deemed improper and irreverent. Bishop Hall has recommended both postures: "I will stand," said he, "as a servant before my Master; or kneel as a subject before my Prince." When we come to receive the commands of God in reading His word, for instance, the former posture may be very proper: but when we come as sinners to deprecate the wrath of an offended Judge, and to supplicate for mercy, the humblest posture is the most becoming. He was pained to see the



standing system gaining ground among us in public prayer, and discountenanced it by every proper means. God forbid that it should prevail! Situations, postures, and circumstances have a remarkable effect on the mind, though they often exert their influence without being particularly perceived. Hence the posture in which we habitually put ourselves in order to slumber or sleep, almost infallibly induces the thing. But it requires only a small measure of reflection to convince us, that those postures in which the body is wont to find its ease, or vacate itself to comparative carelessness, must be improper in those acts of worship where the mental energy is seldom called forth without interesting and employing every corporeal power. Kneeling upright, he fervently recommended, after the example of Mr. Wesley, who always insisted on the preachers acting thus. These may appear to many little things; but their effects are neither little nor unimportant. Kneeling down, and then leaning the body forward so as to rest on a bed, chair, &c., may be profitable to meditation, but is often prejudicial to the genuine spirit of prayer. Besides, it is a posture in which many are apt to fall asleep. I have witnessed this painfully on a variety of occasions.

4. At breakfast, dinner, &c., he never asked a blessing sitting. This he deemed a very unbecoming posture, and was heartily pained at several of our people adopting what he used to call "this new mode." As soon as breakfast was over, he went to family worship, which he never permitted anything to put aside. His method was to read a chapter in his regular order of going through the Bible, and then sing a few verses of a hymn before he went to prayer. On these occasions his prayers were always

lively, and never long. I cannot forbear remarking here, that though small families, insulated in domestic occupations, may find that after breakfast is a convenient time for family worship; yet I am satisfied, from long and close observation, that before this meal is the best time. All the family must, in general, come together to breakfast; immediately after, they become scattered to their different occupations, so that, in many cases, it is impossible to get them all together to prayer. This I have often been perplexed with, especially in families that do not live by rule; and how few are there that do! and to prevent or cure this evil, I always seize the time of their gathering together to food, in order to induce them to offer their joint supplications to God: for then, temptations to dissipation are less frequent, and calls to go out on business seldom occur, or are felt commanding, till that necessary meal be received.

5. Though Mr. Pawson was a man of a comparatively good constitution, yet he never could preach at five in the morning without being very seriously indisposed: he, however, frequently attended his brethren's ministry at that hour. His case puzzled Mr. Wesley more than anything of the kind he had ever met with. It is well known, that he held it to be the indispensable duty of every preacher, to preach at five in the morning wherever he could get a congregation; and that it contributed greatly to mental and corporal vigour: but on several occasions he had the opportunity of seeing alarming consequences of exertions of this kind in Mr. Pawson, and was obliged to allow that his, at least, was an exempt case, for which he could not possibly account.

6. Though Mr. Pawson's talents as a preacher were not either extraordinary or splendid, yet he was

generally popular, and always useful. His voice was clear and sweet, yet strong and commanding; his manner plain and unaffected, but uncommonly animated and impressive. Every serious mind felt an unction in all he said; and perhaps there was no case where a person in spiritual distress left his ministry without having received comfort and encouragement. Before he went into the pulpit he took due care to secure to himself an hour of retirement, that he might come immediately from the presence of God into the congregation. He who can habitually act otherwise is never likely to be of much use to the church of God. Preachers should make it a point of conscience never to go out to tea the evening they have to preach, as this must necessarily break in on the evening's hour of retirement, and tend greatly to dissipate and unhinge the mind.

7. No congregation ever waited for Mr. Pawson: he was always in the pulpit precisely at the appointed time. He saw that want of punctuality in this respect had lessened the influence and hurt the usefulness of others, as well as injured the congregations; and therefore he ever avoided it.

8. The matter of his discourses was sound and edifying. He seldom preached without bringing before the eyes of his hearers the outlines, at least, of all the grand doctrines of the Gospel. The opinions which state that Christ did not die for every man, and that indwelling sin must continue in the soul of a believer till death, he considered to be horrible and anti-Christian: against these he raised his voice in a decisive but temperate manner. A free, full, and present salvation from all the guilt, all the power, and all the inbeing of sin, was his constant theme; and though he never forgot to exhort

believers to have respect to every moral duty, yet he took care to show that these without Christ were nothing, and that from Him alone all pure morality must necessarily proceed. Thus, like a wise master-builder, he was careful to lay his foundation aright, so that in his own soul and in others the superstructure might be permanent and glorious.

9. The doctrines of the witness of the Spirit, and salvation from all sin in this life, he considered a depositum entrusted by the especial mercy of God to the care of the Methodists; and was greatly distressed when he found any among ourselves denying them, or attempting to fret them away by far-fetched refined speculations.

10. The zeal with which he urged penitents to look for present pardon, and believers to expect immediate deliverance from all sin, was great and exemplary. Nothing short of this experience he considered as salvation; and multitudes felt the power of his persuasive arguments in reference to these grand objects, and became living and dying witnesses of their truth.

11. For several of the last years of his life the love of Christ, in dying for the sin of the world, was a subject on which he particularly delighted to dwell: the heavenly principle was rapidly increasing in his own soul, and from the abundance of his heart his mouth spoke. To all who enjoyed a measure of communion with God, his discourses on this subject were exceedingly profitable.

12. In his own house his deportment was steady, and sufficiently authoritative, but always easy and cheerful. Regularity and economy marked his every step, and his family were moulded after his own spirit. Each seemed to feel reverence for the other,

and yet there was no gloomy reserve; all were cheerful, because all were happy.

13. In company he was one of the most instructive companions I ever met with. Having lived long in the work, travelled much, and seen a vast variety of men and things, which he was accustomed to view as connected links in the great providential chain of causes and effects, he acquired, through their means, much general knowledge, and much experience. He had selected from his own observation a great number of anecdotes, some illustrative of the fantastic varieties of the human character, others of the providence, and others of the gracious operations, of God. These he detailed on all proper occasions in a very pleasing language and impressive manner. He had also acquainted himself very extensively with the ecclesiastical history of the past age, and was deeply skilled in that of the present, as he had been almost at the beginning of that great work which God, by the instrumentality of the people called Methodists, had performed in these countries and in America. This made his company very pleasant, and very interesting. Knowing the end from the beginning, he had it in his power to give much useful information to his junior brethren of the spreading of that cloud which first appeared as a human hand; and to call back those who were becoming eccentric, to those first principles on which God had founded, and by which He has regulated, the whole of our economy and usefulness, as a religious people.

14. I never met with an instance in the whole course of my acquaintance, whether religious or literary, where that description given by the Rev.

Samuel Wesley was more strictly exemplified than in Mr. Pawson,

“Not grave with sternness, nor with lightness free.”

He never trifled ; he never impaired his authority or respectability as a minister of God by any lightness or improper compliances. He could not, he would not, accommodate himself to any kind of company : “I cannot,” said he, “talk for the sake of talking, nor merely to oblige, when I have reason to believe no real good can be produced by it.” I have been with him more than once, where there was such company as neither of us could be free in ; and in such cases he was constantly silent, except when spoken to ; yet even in his silence his pleasing countenance was a most intelligible index of his happy mind.

15. Though he was remarkable for the cheerfulness of his general temper, yet from the frequent impositions which had been practised upon him, and the fear he had of entering into the spirit of the world, he was rendered sufficiently cautious ; and this caused him to behave with distance and reserve to those he did not know. This induced some superficial observers to think he was morose, and others, that he was unkind. He confessed he was not very easy of access to indiscriminate visitors ; and that nature and grace had conjoined to make him so : “Were I otherwise,” said he, “my time would be more intruded on than it generally is.”

16. He was very susceptible of friendship, and formed many connexions of this kind, especially among the preachers : but in some cases this did not contribute to his comfort ; for as he opened his



whole heart to his friend, without any kind of reserve, he ever expected the same in return, and could not brook the shadow of neglect. Perhaps there is no love without jealousy; and where this exists, there must be a proportionate measure of anxiety and inquietude.

17. The principal failing I ever noticed in my venerable friend was too great a readiness to permit slanderous accusations, or slight evidences of unkindness, to induce him to break with some of those who, I am conscious, ever duly appreciated his excellencies, and prized his worth. He was, however, not obstinate in these reverses; and when convinced that he had been misled or mistaken, his affection returned to that channel in which it delighted to flow. He had several particular favourites among the preachers; and it is worthy of remark, that none of them ever disgraced him, and they now deservedly rank among the most excellent in our Connexion. Singling out such men as the objects of his confidence was at once a proof of the sincerity of his piety, and the correctness of his judgment.

18. His attachment to the cause of God was strong and invariable. The peace and prosperity of the work he sought and promoted with his whole soul and strength. He rejoiced in the welfare of Jerusalem, and deeply mourned in her adversities. When by the publication of his sermon on the Balm of Gilead, he had given that occasion which he never designed to his adversaries to say all manner of evil against the work of God, he was exceedingly distressed.\* None can tell the deep agony his heart

\* In his private diary this matter is noted in a most affecting manner. He feared lest the clamour that was raised against him

went through: that it hurt his constitution, and brought on his death sooner than in the course of nature it would have happened, I have no doubt. Let his adversaries hear this, and reap from it all the vindictive gratification they are capable of. His conduct for more than half a century, in trying and uncertain times, had sufficiently attested his affection to his country, and his loyalty to his king; but because there were a few sentences that could be perverted to a meaning, which in the most solemn manner he disavowed, and which every man that knew him was assured he never intended, he was hunted down by two or three desperate and uncharitable writers, as though he had been the most noisome of wild beasts, and the most seditious and inhumane of men. May God forgive them! and I have authority to say he forgave them from his whole heart; and that during the whole of this fiery trial, he was never known once to murmur, or to speak one unkind word of his persecutors.

19. His management of the concerns of the work of God in the Circuits where he laboured was judicious and conciliating in a very eminent degree. He had no jars where he laboured; his authority was ever exercised with mildness and moderation, and was universally respected. It was easy to see that he had no end in view but the glory of God; and was always ready to sacrifice his ease, property, health, and life itself to the promoting the religion of Christ among men. Hence, no one could fall out with him, who had the same end only in view.

should be levelled against the cause of God, and often wished that his own name might be rather blotted out from among the living than that the cause of God should suffer any injury on his account.

20. As God's glory was his sole aim, he was ever on the Lord's side; he could not temporize; he was instantly decided when he saw what he believed to be God's truth, and his own duty. In some cases he might be mistaken; but his object and principles never changed. He was what he used to say every genuine Christian should be, upright and downright.

21. For his conscientious attachment to truth he was remarkable. He never suffered himself to tell the same story in two different ways; and so fully had he habituated himself to integrity and scrupulous exactness in words, as well as in actions, that I have often observed him to repeat the same stories and anecdotes, on different occasions, in precisely the same terms, without variation of language or additional circumstance! This was not merely the result of a good memory, but of a sound judgment, and a conscientious heart.

22. I have already referred to his economy in general; but there is one branch of it so intimately connected with his uprightness, that it should not be slightly passed by: I mean the great care he took of the furniture he found in the different Circuit-houses where he lodged. He never permitted anything to be wasted, nor suffered any injury to be done to the meanest article, leaving everything at least in as good repair as he found it.

As he was a strict economist, and lived by rule, he was never hurried: everything was referred to its own place and time. As soon as it was necessary to perform any particular act, he never deferred it for an hour; so that his work was always done in due time, and he was generally beforehand with it. Temporal matters he never named till they became necessary,

and never repeated afterwards, unless through the inattention of others they had been neglected. This kept him free from dissipation of spirit; and his mind was so recollected, and possessed of such self-government, that, after having fulfilled any extra engagement, he would return to his usual employment as if he had suffered no interruption.

23. His judgment was remarkably correct. I have had occasion to admire its decisions in a multitude of difficult cases. As his understanding was clear, and his conscience pure, he seldom found much difficulty in apprehending the truth; and as he had nothing in view but the glory of God and the welfare of His cause, he formed his decisions with firmness and promptitude.

24. He never courted the friendship of the affluent, either in our societies, or among our hearers. In this respect he had a noble and independent mind. He endeavoured to think well of all; but he could not, as many have done, pay more attention to the rich than to the poor, nor slacken the reins of discipline on their account. There are many who continually forget that a man is before God simply what he is in his soul, and not what he is in his purse or possessions. Some carry this inattention so far, that the smallest dawning of spiritual good in a rich or honourable man is magnified into a constellation of excellencies. This is certainly knowing a man after the flesh, and consulting the sight of the eye only in judgment. The consequence of this conduct is ruinous beyond calculation. The rich man thus treated imagines himself to be what he is not; and trusting to the fancied goodness of his state, he halts long before his race is finished. Is it not through the influence of false friends and flatterers

that so few of those who are in affluence ever excel in deep piety?

25. Salvation from the present evil world according to the will of God is much rarer among the followers of Christ, than from their privileges and calling we might naturally expect: and hence there is much of that fear of man prevalent among the professors of Christianity, which leads them to suppress the truth, lest they should give offence. From Mr. Pawson's heart this, with the love of the world, had been long banished. When he first found peace with God, the love of the world was entirely taken away, and could never afterwards resume its ancient seat; indeed he often wondered how persons could reconcile the love of God with either the desire of the eye, the desire of the flesh, or the pride of life. The attempt to do this is a notorious profanation of the grace of the Gospel, and should be ranked with the basest crimes.

26. Of Mr. Pawson's deep piety, of his extensive usefulness, and of his glorious end, others have spoken: I therefore forbear entering into these subjects, as they are amply treated in the account of his life and death, and in the funeral sermons by Messrs. Moore and Roberts, already published. One thing more I beg leave to present to the reader's view,—that uncommon ease and copious flow of language remarkable in his conversation, epistolary correspondence, and in his preaching. As he had very few advantages from education, this could be attributed to no other cause but the order and harmony of his mind. Through this, every faculty performed its proper functions, and every idea had its peculiar place; whence it came forth in its regular connexion on every proper occasion, without

irrelevance on the one hand, or confusion on the other.

I cannot conclude this short sketch better than in the words of one who knew him better than all others, and whose loss can only be made up by that all-sufficient God who has graciously promised to be the husband of the widow.

27. "IF my late husband was esteemed a light in the church of God, his behaviour in his family was such to us. To take any part of his character separate from the rest, perhaps little striking may be seen in it: but when we consider that assemblage of the graces of the Spirit which were combined to give lustre to it, then the whole becomes striking and worthy of notice. He had a good natural understanding, and a solid judgment, improved by deep thinking: his words, therefore, carried weight with them. They were not delivered at random, but sprung from a mind that was accustomed to weigh what it was going to utter before a word was spoken. He was a polished stone, prepared by the Divine Master to glorify Him in His temple here below, by turning many from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. Some of these, after living a life of piety here on earth, finished their course with triumph; others are yet in the wilderness, praising God that they ever heard the Gospel from his lips. After labouring in the Lord's vineyard forty-four years, a great many were witnesses of the consolation he derived from those precious and essential truths he had been enforcing upon others during that period. He found them a solid foundation in his dying moments, enabling him to shout Victory! victory! through the blood of the Lamb.



“Whilst I cannot but feelingly lament the loss I have sustained in being deprived of such a husband, and the church of such an exemplary pattern, may I with them profit by the example he has left us, and follow him as he followed Christ !

“ F. PAWSON.”

28. The following letter, which is the last he ever wrote, a short time after which his right hand forgot its cunning, I shall subjoin as his own last testimony to the power of God to save, and his concern for the full establishment and final prevalence of those glorious truths which he now found to be the support of his soul, when his heart and flesh failed. The occasion of it was simply this. On hearing that his disorder was rapidly gaining ground, but not knowing how low he was then reduced, I wrote a very pressing letter to him and Mrs. Pawson, to take easy journeys, and come immediately up to London, where he might have the best medical advice, and to continue with me till the Lord should be pleased to restore him. In this I was affectionately joined by my brother and sister Butterworth, who wished him to come and make their house his home. When this letter was read to him, he was much affected, and poured out his soul in ardent prayer for those who had requested him to take this journey. Notwithstanding his great weakness, when his nephew Mr. Entwisle, and Mr. James Burton, had retired from his room for a short time, he struggled out of bed, put on his morning-gown, got his writing-desk to his bedside, and wrote the following comparatively long letter, after which he never dictated nor wrote another :—

“ WAKEFIELD, *Friday, March 7th, 1806.*

29. “ O MY ADAM, my most affectionately beloved and highly esteemed friend and brother, for whom, God knoweth, I ever had a sincere regard, but now tenfold more so than ever ; I return you my sincerest and most cordial thanks for your kind invitation to me to come to London. Alas, how little did you know the state I was then in ! Nevertheless, your love and kindness so tenderly expressed, call very loudly upon me for suitable returns of gratitude and love to you, and good and tender-hearted Mrs. Clarke, as well as to kind and generous Mr. and Mrs. Butterworth, to whom return my warmest acknowledgments.

“ O my dear brother, what I have suffered, what I now continue to suffer, and what still lies before me, is only known to God. But, glory to God in the highest, I am in the hands of Him who ever was, and who never can cease to be, infinitely wise and infinitely good ; whom I have found to be so to me, an unworthy worm, to the present hour. For ever blessed be His glorious name !

“ What I have experienced of the power and goodness, of the unmerited mercy and love, of God during this affliction, is not to be described by me. O the views, the soul-transporting views, of that heavenly felicity that my soul hath been favoured with ! My loving friend, praise the name of the Lord with me and for me. And you may tell all my beloved London friends, that J. Pawson dies a witness of the saving power of those precious truths which have been taught, believed, and experienced among us from the beginning of Methodism. Alas, for all the double refinements which a Mr. —, or anyone else, may have found out ! Give me good old Methodism in

its unadorned simplicity and plainness; in its spirit, life, and power; and they may (set) up one church, and try to set up another as high as they can. But God, and God alone, shall be exalted, and His name glorified by all His redeemed creatures through one eternal day.\*

“I write thus freely to you from the grave’s mouth, because I know your very soul loves the good old truth; and I trust you will live and die by it, and in full possession of it in your heart! But I must give up; I can do no more. I have had a sore bout with this incoherent scrawl; and whether you will be able to make it out or not, I cannot tell. My head is so weak that I can scarcely spell a word right.

“Ten thousand times ten thousand blessings attend you, your beloved Mary, and all your family! God Almighty bless, preserve, and keep you, and make you an abundant blessing to your family, the church, and the world! J. Pawson’s dying prayer for you is, that goodness and mercy may follow you all the days of your life, and that you may dwell in the house of the Lord for ever! Surely, if the love of the people and preachers, joined together, can keep me from the grave, I must not die at this time. I never saw anything like it in the whole course of my life.

“Farewell for ever! Bless the Lord for me, and we shall all eternally enjoy Him very soon.

\* Mr. Pawson alludes here to the attempts made by a certain person to invalidate the doctrine of the witness of the Spirit, by endeavouring to prove that no more can be meant by it than the confidence and satisfaction which are felt by believers from a consciousness of the gracious change made in their state, and the sincerity of their heart towards God.

“I am most affectionately and eternally yours in Christ Jesus,

“J. PAWSON.”

30. Thus lived, thus died, John Pawson ; a man of irreproachable integrity, of unspotted life, and of very extensive usefulness. As he honoured his God with his body, soul, and substance, so God honoured him with the highest affection and strongest confidence of His church and people, with an unction and baptism of the Holy Ghost, and with such a victory and triumph over sin, death, and the grave, as would have been glorious even in apostolic times.

It is scarcely necessary to say to your readers in general, that this heavenly man entered on the enjoyment of the eternal inheritance on the morning of Wednesday, March 19th, 1806, in the sixty-ninth year of his age. Precious in the sight of God is the death of His saints ; and their name shall be had in everlasting remembrance.

ADAM CLARKE.

LONDON, *January 1st*, 1807.

THE LIFE  
OF  
MR. SAMPSON STANIFORTH.

---

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

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REV. AND DEAR SIR,

I NEVER thought I should be called upon to appear in print, or to give an account of myself, considering how many of my brethren there are who have not only deeper experience, but far greater abilities, and more time than I have. But since you desire it of me, I think it my duty to obey those that are over me in the Lord. I now, therefore, cast my mite into the treasury, and pray God it may be profitable to some soul. I shall first speak of my life from the time of my birth till I was about twenty-five years old; and, secondly, from the time that God called me, to the present time. I am sensible my case is peculiar, both in a state of sin and in my conversion to God; and my account of it must be very imperfect, as I never kept any diary, and can only set down a few things that I can call to mind, after so many years.

I was born at Sheffield, in December, 1720. My

father, who was a cutler, had thirteen children ; but only four lived to years of maturity. There was no care taken in my education ; none in the family having the form, much less the power, of religion : so that, while I was young, I heard nothing about either religion or morality. Hence it was that I had no conviction of any kind, no fear of God before my eyes, no thought of His providence, of His sparing mercy, or indeed of His having anything to do in the world. Nay, I was totally averse to all good, and hated the very appearance of religion. And in this deplorable state I continued, till I was fourteen years of age.

I was then put apprentice to a baker. This was a very good place for my body ; but no care at all was taken of my soul : only that sometimes my master made me read on Sunday a chapter in the Bible. But I knew not what it meant, nor why it was called the word of God, or what people went to church for. From fourteen to seventeen, I was diligent in my business, and gave satisfaction to my master. But all this time, I never once thought, Why was I born into the world ? What is my business in it ? Or where shall I go when this life is over ?

I was now fast bound with the chains of sin, filled with unholy desires, and, as often as occasion offered, bringing them into practice. And I had not the least remorse for any of the sins I was daily committing ; being as perfectly “without God in the world” as the beasts that perish. I now got into bad company, and by their advice and encouragement ran into open wickedness, gaming in particular to the great disadvantage of my master, and the great sorrow of my parents. And yet I still had not



the least compunction, nor any more sorrow for sin than a wild ass's colt.

I began about this time to get into company with the soldiers that were in the town. And I frequently told my mother that I had an inclination to go into the army. This troubled her much, and she often with tears expostulated with me concerning it. To keep me out of it, she used to supply me with money. But this only enabled me to keep more company, and to run into all manner of sin. Several times she fetched me away from my companions at night; but whenever I could, I ran away from her, and got to them again; and in this ungodly course I went on, till I was about nineteen years of age.

One night I was in company with a neighbour's son, who had been in the army some time, and was now absent from it upon a furlough, to spend a few days with his friends. After we had been drinking till about eleven o'clock, he asked me whether I would not list. I immediately answered, I would; and he gave me three guineas, and a crown to drink His Majesty's health: we continued drinking all night. In the morning one came in that knew me, who went and told my mother. She came with one of my sisters, and took me home, and put me to bed. Afterwards she went and returned the money which I had received, and with a little more bought me off. I then went home to my master, who received me very kindly, and did not upbraid me with anything that I had done.

But all this made not the least impression upon me. I felt no gratitude either to God or man. About eight days after, as I was one morning going out with my bread, I met the sergeant and two more

soldiers, and told them I wanted to list. We went into an alehouse together, and I received the money from them. I sent the basket back to my master, and immediately went two miles to the justice's to take the oath. About a fortnight after, I left Sheffield. All my friends were in tears; but it made no impression on me: as I was not only fierce and passionate, but also sullen and malicious, without any feeling of humanity. Instead of weeping with those that wept, I even rejoiced in their sorrow.

Hence we marched for Edinburgh. We arrived there on the 15th of the November preceding the great frost. I was drafted into one of the companies that lay in the castle: there my hardships began. There were no barracks then, but we lay upon straw in the vault, and throughout the winter had but one fire for seventy men. Through my own sin and folly, my little pay was soon gone; and generally two days in a week, Tuesday and Friday, being the days before the pay-days, I had little or nothing to eat. But even this, together with hard duty, made no manner of impression upon my heart. Nay, I became more hardened, and added profane swearing to my other sins. From thence we marched to Glasgow, where I several times heard that servant of God, Mr. Whitefield. But I had no conception of what he said, nor any desire to profit by it. We next marched to Ayr, where a kind Providence watched over me for good. For I and two more wild fellows took a boat, and rowed down toward the sea. But we had not skill to manage it, and the ebbing tide was carrying us down to the sea; when just at the end of the pier, the boat gave a turn, and we caught hold of a post. Here we held, till help came; otherwise we had probably gone to the bottom of the sea, and to the

bottomless pit at once, as we were all sinning with a high hand, drinking in iniquity like water.

From this place we marched to Perth, and lay there some time. During our stay, I paid my addresses to a young woman. But though she loved me, I did not behave to her with that honour I should have done. Just at that time the old Highland regiment came to quarter at Perth; and I was remanded to the other side of the river, to a little village called Bridge-End. She had some relations in this regiment, to whom she told what had passed between us. They sent for me, and, for some time, behaved with a deal of kindness, expecting that I would give them farther promises of fulfilling my engagement with her. She was present at the same time. Finding I did not in any wise answer their expectations, they began talking together in their own language, and, as I could not but observe, with great warmth of spirit. Though I did not, she understood what they said, and endeavoured to pacify them. A little after she rose up, called me out, told me, they were determined to kill me, and begged me, for God's sake, to return with all speed into my own quarters: I took her advice, and returned immediately. I came to town again the next market-day. They heard of it, and were in search of me, being fully determined upon revenge. But she found me out first, informed me of their fixed resolution to murder me, and insisted on my crossing the water without delay. I ran to the water-side. A boat was just going off, into which I stepped: but before we were half over the water, they came running down, with their swords drawn, to the river-side. But they durst go no farther, there being strict orders that none should pass the river.

We marched from Perth to Edinburgh, and thence to Shields, in order to embark with the rest of the army for Flanders. I had now been three years and a half in the army. We were eight days on our passage, and landed at Ostend, in spring, 1743. Thence we marched to Ghent, where we were joined by three regiments more, to guard the king's baggage and the army's clothing. This was a long and fatiguing march, as well as a dangerous one. We had above four hundred waggons, with other carriages, and several pieces of cannon, under our care; and expected every day to be attacked by a part of the French army. So that we were obliged constantly to march in order of battle, and had no settled camp, till we came to the grand army, a few days after the battle of Dettingen.

We then marched to the camp at Worms. There orders were read at the head of every regiment, that no soldier must be seen above a mile from the camp, upon pain of death; which was to be executed immediately, without the form of a court-martial. But this did not at all deter me. Although my life was in continual danger, I went on in the same course all the campaign, neither fearing God, nor regarding man. One night in particular, as soon as we had pitched our tents, I set out, with some of my comrades, to a little town which lay on the left of the camp. I was busy in drinking, when the captain with a guard of horse was coming to take us up, being appointed to seize upon all who were found out of the lines, and to hang up the first man without delay. I looked back, and saw the captain and his guard, who had shut all the gates. But I ran to the great gate, wherein was a wicket-door, which was only upon the latch. I slipped through,

and before the gate could be opened for horsemen to follow me, I ran some distance from the town, and hid myself among the vines. There I lay till they were passed, and then got into the camp, just as the roll was calling.

After several marches, we came, toward the close of the year, to the camp near Spires. Before this, many grievous complaints had been made of our soldiers plundering the country. To prevent this, it was again proclaimed at the head of every regiment, that the captain with his guard would be out every night, and had express orders immediately to hang up the first man that he took. I was close to the officer who read this; and, to show how little we regarded it, as soon as he was gone to his tent, I and ten more of our regiment set out to plunder. We went to a village about two miles from the camp, to search for money, but could find none: however, we saw four bullocks, which we drove away before us. One of our officers met me, and asked whose they were. I told him they were some that we had bought: he said, "Very well," and went away. We sold three of them, and killed the other. The next day the poor people came to the camp, and found the three which we had sold. They made their complaint to the commanding-officer, who immediately gave orders to apprehend us. But that very morning I had been sent to some distance from the camp on an out-party: so the good providence of God, though I knew Him not, once more preserved me from a shameful death.

Orders now came for our marching into Flanders, in which long march nothing material happened. The English army quartered in Bruges and Ghent: our regiment was in Ghent; where we had cold

lodgings, little fire, and hard duty. I lay here three months, still continuing in my ignorance and rebellion against God. Meantime I had many sorrowful letters from my dear mother, with frequent little supplies of money. All the next summer we lay quite inactive, only plundering all the country. When I look back on those times, I know not which to admire most, God's goodness or my own wickedness: to complete which, I was now engaged with a Negro-man's wife, who was passionately fond of me. But what is too hard for God? I was now about twenty-five years old; and had never yet once said, with any real desire, "Lord, have mercy upon me!" But better days were at hand. The manner of God's bringing me out of the horrible pit I am next to relate.

After several marches, we came to another camp, where we lay nine or ten weeks. There was one in the same company with me, whose experience was a direct contrast to mine. His name was Mark Bond. He was born at Barnard-Castle, in the county of Durham. For many years I was wholly without God in the world; but he feared God from three years old, and was under great concern for his soul, and many times prayed to God in secret. When his parents sometimes put him to bed without saying his prayers, as soon as they were gone, he would rise and say them: otherwise he could not sleep. From this time, till he was seven years old, he was harassed with various temptations; but with one above all: he was violently and continually importuned to curse God, till one day, when he was about seven years of age, he went into the fields, under a hedge, and actually did it. The moment he had uttered the words, he was in great horror and distress of soul:



he then thought, God would no more have mercy, and that there was no salvation for him. Nevertheless he was, by the fear of God, restrained from outward sin. From that time till he was about eighteen, the sorrows of his heart were enlarged. He concluded he must go to hell, and had no Christian friend to advise with. O, what need have we to bless God for those helps he was destitute of! He durst not, however, put an end to his own life; but, a recruiting party being in the town, he entered into the army, desiring and hoping that he should soon be killed. Upon this principle he listed in the company I was in; but his ways were not like those of other men. Out of his little pay he saved money to send to his friends. We could never get him to drink with us; but he was always full of sorrow; he read much, and was much in private prayer.

At the beginning of the campaign, he went to hear the preaching of John Haime, William Clements, and John Evans. There he found what he wanted. God soon spake peace to his soul, and he rejoiced with joy unspeakable. He then began to think, whom he should open his mind to. He thought of several; but could fix on none but me. He could not shake me off his mind, till he came to me and told me what God had done for his soul, adding, how desperate my case would be, if I died without experiencing the same. But all of this was strange language to me. I understood it not; and as soon as he was gone, I used to go to her I mentioned before, and make sport of all he had said. He came to me after, but I would not hear him. He then endeavoured to turn his thoughts on some one else; but I was continually on his mind, sleeping and waking. He could not rest, either day or

night, but it was on his mind, "Go to Sampson." He came to me, and told me what he had felt and suffered on my account. But I did not mind it, till he met me one time, when I was in distress, having neither food, money, nor credit. On his coming and asking me to go and hear the preaching, I said, "You had better give me something to eat or drink; for I am both hungry and dry." He took me to a sutler's, and gave me both meat and drink. Then he took me by the hand, and led me to a place erected about half a mile from the camp. I had no desire to hear anything of religion, but on the contrary went with great reluctance. Who it was that was speaking I do not know; but this I know, that God spake to my heart. In a few minutes I was in deep distress, full of sorrow, under a deep sense of sin and danger, but mixed with a desire of mercy. And now, I that never prayed in my life was continually calling upon God: in time past, I could shed tears for nothing; but now the rock was rent; a fountain was opened, and tears of contrition ran plentifully down my cheeks. A cry after God was put into my heart, which has never yet ceased, and, I trust, never will. My dear companion observed it with great joy. I was as it were knocked down like an ox. I had nothing to plead, having never had either the power or the form of godliness. No works, no righteousness was mine. I could only say, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

From that hour, as much addicted to it as I was before, I never swore an oath; and I was never more overcome by liquor, though I had been so enslaved to it for several years. Indeed there was a constant cry in my inmost soul, "Save, Lord, or I perish!" When the preaching was over, my dear companion

took me in his arms, blessed God with a joyful heart, and said, he would come the next night, and fetch me to the preaching. I went to my tent full of sorrow, thoroughly convinced what a miserable state I was in, and seeing all my sins stand in battle-array against me. All the next day I was longing for the time of hearing preaching and seeing my dear companion. But I had not patience to stay so long. I went to the place, some time before they began. There were several soldiers of other regiments come before me. Some were reading; others conversing of the things of God. Some at a little distance were singing; and some down in a corner were at prayer. I was walking about, my heart full of sorrow, my eyes full of tears, wishing I could pour out my heart to God like them, when one came to me, and kindly asked me, if I came to preaching, and how long I had done so. I answered, "Last night was the first time." He took me aside, and said, "Let us go to prayer." I said, "I cannot pray; I never prayed in my life." But he went to prayer with me. By this time my dear friend was come, and rejoiced to find that I was there before him. The more I heard, the more deeply was I convinced of sin, and of my danger on account of it. He asked, if I had a Bible or any good book. I said, "No; I knew not that ever I had read any." He said, "I have a piece of an old Bible; take it. I can do better without it than you." I took it as a great treasure, and read in it with great joy. The next day my old companions found me out, and called me many names. But it made no impression upon me at all, as I was every day more and more resolved to save my soul. I spent more and more time in reading and prayer, and missed no opportunity of

hearing the word. I was deaf to all the allurements of my comrades, regarding neither their evil nor their good words. I had now a tender conscience; I could neither drink, swear, game, nor plunder any more. I would not take so much as an apple, a bunch of grapes, nor anything that was not my own.

My companion, who had been employed for some time in an out-party, now came home to the company. He immediately took me to be with him as his comrade, and watched over me, as a tender parent over a beloved child. He inquired into all my affairs; and, finding I had contracted some debts, said, "The followers of Christ must be first just, and then charitable. We will put both our pays together, and live as hard as we can; and what we spare will pay the debt." From this time, I continued, by the grace of God, seeking Him with my whole heart.

Many trials I had, partly from my old companions, partly from the sins I was before given to. But, glory be to God! I was preserved from both, and enabled to persevere in the way of duty. My companion took every step he could to help me forward in the ways of God. Nevertheless all this campaign I was in great distress of soul; yet I hated sin, and followed God, though I knew He was angry with me. The more I heard, and the more I read the word, the greater was my pain; for I saw more clearly my miserable state, both by nature and by practice. All the remainder of the campaign I was in deep distress, having sometimes a little hope, sometimes none. But still I was convinced, the way of duty was the only way of safety.

The work of God now greatly increased among us.

And indeed the change which God wrought upon me gave a great alarm, not only in our company, but through the whole regiment. My dear companion and I began to reprove sinners, to invite them to hear the preaching, and to exhort as many as would hear to turn to God and flee from the wrath to come. And it pleased God to bless our weak endeavours, so that before the end of the campaign we had ten in the regiment I was in, who were closely united together, and were joined in such love for one another that we had in effect all things in common. And, thanks be to God, the flame spread through all the camp, so that we had a large number of hearers, and more and more were continually added to the society. I still went on my way sorrowing, but bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. When the camp broke up, we marched for winter-quarters, part to Ghent, and part to Bruges. I was afraid we should be left without a preacher; but God took care of this also. For as the army was divided, so were the preachers. John Haime and John Evans lay at Bruges, and William Clements at Ghent, where our regiment was. I rejoiced much at hearing this; although it could not take away the load of guilt which pressed down my soul.

As soon as our regiment was settled at Ghent, we hired two rooms: one for preaching, and one for private meetings; for, when off duty, we met twice a day. Here my sorrows increased. It was strongly suggested to me, that my day of grace was past, that I had sinned the unpardonable sin, and it signified nothing to strive any longer. O, what distress my poor soul was in! I thought the very stones in the street, and the timber in the wall, cried out against me for my enormous wickedness. I felt that

truth, "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmities; but a wounded spirit who can bear?"

I told all my troubles to my dear companion, who truly sympathized with me; but told me, I should not be thus long, for the time of my deliverance was at hand.

Yet I went on in the same state, having little hope of mercy, till one day I was ordered on duty at one of the out-posts. I was in deep distress, which my companion observed, and, when he parted from me, said, "I hope you will have better news to tell me when you see me again." When I came to the guard-house, I longed to be alone, that I might pour out my soul before God. I thought myself the most miserable creature on earth, far beneath the brute and inanimate creatures; all of which answered the end of their creation, which I had never done! From twelve at night till two it was my turn to stand sentinel at a dangerous post. I had a fellow-sentinel; but I desired him to go away, which he willingly did. As soon as I was alone, I kneeled down, and determined not to rise, but to continue crying and wrestling with God, till He had mercy on me. How long I was in that agony I cannot tell; but as I looked up to heaven, I saw the clouds open exceeding bright, and I saw Jesus hanging on the cross. At the same moment these words were applied to my heart, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." My chains fell off; my heart was free. All guilt was gone, and my soul was filled with unutterable peace. I loved God and all mankind, and the fear of death and hell was vanished away. I was filled with wonder and astonishment. I then closed my eyes; but the impression was still the same. And for about ten weeks, while I was awake, let me be where I would,



the same appearance was still before my eyes, and the same impression upon my heart, "Thy sins are forgiven thee."

The corporal came at two o'clock to relieve the sentries, but I could not think the time was half gone. When I came into the guard-house, I was full of matter, and longed to tell what God had done for my soul. But I did not dare to cast pearls before swine. I longed for my dear companion, that we might rejoice together. As soon as the time for relieving the guard came, I hastened to the room where I lay. As I was going my companion was looking for me, and, before I could speak, said, "I know God has set your soul at liberty; I see it in your countenance." I then told him all. And after we had taken some refreshment, we went to our little company, and concluded the day in prayer and praise, magnifying God for all His mighty works.

During our stay in Ghent, we met twice or thrice a day, either for preaching, prayer, or to tell our experience to each other. And God increased our number every day, so that we had now some in almost every regiment. I was still happy; but found a strong desire to be more holy, that I might be more happy. And from this time, rev. and dear sir, I found my heart united to you, and to the people that were under your care, of whom brother Clements was often speaking; and I truly loved them whom I had not seen. Indeed I considered myself as a member of the same body, and longed greatly to see them.

About this time I began to think of my parents and family. My dear mother had, from time to time, sent me little supplies, either in money, or

such other things as she knew I wanted. I now sent her a long letter, asking pardon of my father and her for all my past disobedience, and telling them that God, for Christ's sake, had forgiven me all my sins. I thanked her for what she had done for me; but desired she would not send anything more, as I knew it must straiten her, and I had now learned to "be content with my wages." This letter they could not at all understand, and it was handed about from one to another, till it came to one Mr. Wadsworth, a Dissenting minister, who, having known what manner of life I led before, could not in any wise believe it. However, he wrote me a friendly letter, and sent me a Bible, which was more welcome to me than gold; as was a Common Prayer-book, which my mother sent me. A few days after, my letter came into the hands of Mr. John Wilson, who was then one of the chief persons in your society, and much alive to God. He sent me a comfortable letter, and a hymn-book, which much refreshed my soul. About this time you sent some books over, which were of great service to us.

On March 26th, 1745, the French, taking the field before us, opened their camp with seventy-six thousand men, and above a hundred and fifty pieces of cannon. We were then ordered to march out of our quarters; but before we could come up, they had laid siege to Tournay, and had intrenched themselves up to the very chin. After several little movements, we were all assembled on the 19th of April, under the Duke of Cumberland, being in all, besides the train of artillery, forty-six thousand men.

By this time, having given way to unprofitable reasoning, I lost my rapturous joy, and a kind of

heaviness followed ; but, blessed be God, the evidence of my acceptance was not interrupted.

We then drew so near the French, that we could hear their evening and morning gun. But between us and them there was a wood, which we were obliged to cut a way through. All the pioneers were employed in this. On the 28th I was ordered to go and guard some baggage ; but on the 29th, early in the morning, the corporal brought me word, “ You must go into the ranks ; for before to-morrow night we shall have a battle.” When I came into the ranks, I felt some fear : but as we came near the French army, we halted a little. I then stepped out of the line, threw myself on the ground, and prayed that God would deliver me from all fear, and enable me to behave as a Christian and good soldier. Glory be to God, He heard my cry, and took away all my fear. I came into the ranks again, and had both peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. By this time night came on. We were ordered to lie on our arms. Toward morning, part of the army marched through the pass which we had cut through the wood. My dear companion and I had sweet communion together, having constant and strong confidence in God. As soon as the dawn of the day appeared, we were ordered to advance. The column on the right had passed through. I was in the second column. But all the road was made almost impassable, which broke the head of our column. And in the mean time, the French batteries, playing upon us, did us much hurt. We wheeled off, in order to get into the plains of Fontenoy. I had not marched far before we met a horse without his rider, and the lower part of his head taken off by a cannon-ball. A little after, I saw one of the guards lie dead ; and soon after, many

more. We still advanced, and drew up in line of battle, in the plain of Fontenoy. The French before us were intrenched up to the neck, and many batteries of cannon were playing upon us. I was in the front rank, and the left-hand man joining the Dutch. We stood there, till the Dutch turned their backs and marched away. I was then left exposed to a battery on the left, and the batteries and small arms in the front. Soon after our regiment, with some others, were ordered to advance and attack the French in their trenches. We marched up boldly ; but when we came close to the town of Fontenoy, we observed a large battery ready to be opened on us. And the cannon were loaded with small bullets, nails, and pieces of old iron. We had orders to lie down on the ground ; but, for all that, many were wounded, and some killed. Presently after the discharge we rose up, and marched to the first trench, still keeping up our fire. They gave way ; but when we entered, batteries in the flanks were opened, which tore our regiment so, that we were obliged to fall back into the rear. Yet we rallied, and renewed the attack. But it was to no purpose. All the day I was in great spirits, and as composed in my mind, as if I had been hearing a sermon. I neither desired life nor death, but was entirely happy in God. Night coming on, the retreat was beaten, and the whole army marched away, leaving our cannon, and sick, and wounded behind us. The profane sinners now received reproof, and promised to become new men ; and though most of them soon forgot their resolutions, yet in some there was a lasting change.

As soon as I had opportunity to speak to my dear companion, he told me, it had been a happy day to him. He had received two musket-balls : but one

struck him on the right thigh, and hit on two seven-penny pieces that were in his pocket; (they are of a mixed metal, about the size of half a crown;) it appeared to him, as if he had received a blow with a stick. The other struck him on his left side-pocket, upon a clasped knife, and bent the blade, and loosened it in the handle. So that we may well say,

“Go and return secure from death,  
Till God command thee home.”

I had eaten nothing that day but a little brown bread, and drank only a little water. But I was very thankful, as if I had received it immediately from the hands of God.

We marched all that night and the next day, and more and more of our scattered army overtook us; but many lay down on the ground, and could go no farther. Glory be to God! He gave me constant peace, and strength to keep with the main body, being always one of the first, till we encamped at Lessines. We then began to inquire, who of our society was gone home. We missed many out of our regiment. One was saying, “O, how happy I am!” and, just as he spoke, a cannon-shot came and took off his head. We lost four preachers, and many of the society. But my dear companion, with the other brethren in the regiment, were still as the heart of one man. Such was the religion of the soldiers at this time, before any of them were corrupted by new opinions! I then thought, “This state of life is the only one to love and serve God in: I would not change it for any other under the sun, upon any consideration whatever.” How did this sweeten all the fatigues, and hardships, and dangers I had to go through! Glory be to God! I rejoiced

in them all. Meantime I was continually exhorting sinners to repent. And they would bear it now, as the French were so near us, and we knew not how soon they would fall upon us. The whole army was drawn up in order of battle, expecting to be attacked by them every day. But, instead of this, they pushed forward, and took Ghent, and afterwards all Flanders, as far as Ostend.

About this time the lieutenant and paymaster of our regiment sent for me, and said, "My servant was killed at Fontenoy, and I intend to take you in his place." As he had always been particularly kind to me, I knew not what to do. It was not a command, but a favour offered, which he left to my choice. I earnestly prayed to God for direction. I then returned him my sincerest thanks for his kind offer, but said, I could not accept it. He looked earnestly at me, and said, "Pray what are your reasons for refusing it?" I answered, "Sir, the first is, I could not have time to attend preaching, and meet with my Christian friends; the second, I should be obliged to do on the Lord's day what would give me great pain, and displease God." He replied, "I like you the better for being so honest. Go your way. I will be your friend."

A short time after, there came an order for ten men out of our regiment to go to the train, and learn the exercise of the great guns, to supply the place of those that were killed at Fontenoy; but active, sober men, and such as could be depended on. The corporal came and said, "Get yourself ready; for you must leave the regiment, and go to the artillery." I was sorry to leave my brethren, but could not in conscience disobey a lawful command. My brethren also were sorry; but we encouraged



each other, that we should not be far from one another. So we prayed and parted. My pay was now near double to what it was before. And I had two of the society with me, brothers Hammond and Hodges; both much alive to God. I was kept in constant peace, athirst for God, and longing for more of His image. As often as I could, I went to see my dear brethren; and we always prayed and praised God together. And even the rest of the company were glad to see me; for I have frequently remarked, there is a kind of affection in the army toward one another, which is hardly to be found elsewhere.

I had not been many weeks in my new employ, when we heard there was a rising in Scotland, and that the rebels had defeated the king's army at Preston Pans, near Edinburgh. And orders came that the greatest part of the English army should march directly for England. I was sent back to my own regiment. We made forced marches, and, the transports being ready at Helvoetsluys, we soon came within sight of land. In all these movements I found no decay of inward life. I knew it was my duty to obey my superiors, and God made it my pleasure. He was always before me in every place; and I could boldly testify,

“Thy presence makes my paradise,  
And where Thou art is heaven.”

Our regiment and two more landed at Gravesend, when we marched on, and encamped at Deptford-heath, in the latter end of October, 1745. The next Lord's day we of the society went to Bexley church. We lay at Bexley three or four weeks, and constantly attended on Mr. Piers's ministry; and there we

received a larger account of you. O, how did I then long to see you! Thence we marched to Deptford. When we were drawn up there in the Broadway, William Giles came and invited us to his house, where we spent the evening in singing and prayer, and my soul was much refreshed. My mind was still kept in perfect peace. It was nothing to me where I was, at home or abroad, in the field or in the church, marching or sitting in the closet. We made long marches from hence, hearing that the rebels were marching swiftly southward. Wherever we were, I inquired if there were any Methodists, that we might sing and pray together. The army was assembled when we came to Stafford; and we were ordered to be ready at a minute's warning. We had not been here many hours, when at ten o'clock, in a cold frosty night, about the middle of December, the drum beat to arms. We were drawn up in order of battle, and marched on, our spies informing us that in two hours we should meet the rebels. We had then orders to load our pieces, and to be ready at the word of command.

We marched on, and the morning came on. The rebels, now hearing of us, turned off for the Derby road, thinking, it seems, to pass us and get to London. By this time we had got to Stone, where we learned they were returning northward. On this the main army was ordered to pursue them, and some regiments to march back to London, lest they should give us the slip. Our regiment was one of these. We were to lie in the towns and villages near London. I had a great desire to lie at Greenwich or Deptford. We made long marches; and when we were near London, orders came, that our regiment should be quartered at Greenwich and Deptford. I

was glad, though I knew not why ; for I had no knowledge either of the place or the people. On Christmas-eve we came to the place ; and I was quartered in the next public-house, which is the very house where I now live.

On Christmas-day we went to church, and spent the evening at brother Giles's, in singing and prayer. We lay here till April, 1746, but had orders not to go above a mile from our quarters. Hearing these orders read, I went to the commanding-officer, who said, "Well, Sampson, what do you want?" I said, "Leave, sir, if you please, for two or three of us to go to London twice or thrice a week." He said, "For what?" I answered, "To hear preaching." "What," said he, "cannot you go to church?" I said, "Yes, sir ; and I count it both my duty and privilege so to do. But I am much united in affection to the Rev. Mr. Wesley ; and I want to see and hear him, and to be joined with him and his people." He looked at me, and said, "Well, thou art the same honest man as before." He immediately wrote an order for me and one or two more to pass to and from London as often as we pleased. He added, that he knew Mr. Wesley, and was glad I had made so good a choice. When not on duty, we likewise met twice a day in the old room at Deptford, to read the Scriptures, and to pray and praise God. At this time I had no thought of preaching, though my dear companion often told me, God would call me to it before I died.

Twice a week, during our stay at Deptford, I went to the Foundry, or West-street chapel, where I was always profited by your preaching. Here I became acquainted with her that is now my wife. After much consideration and prayer, I mentioned the

subject of marriage to her. After a little while she answered, "If I was out of the army, and in some way of business, she had no objection." So here it rested for the present.

One day one of the society desired me to go to Eltham with a message. As soon as I came thither, (it being three miles from our quarters,) a sergeant and two soldiers seized me as a deserter. They brought me back as such to Greenwich, and carried me before the commanding-officer. I told him the real case. He asked them, "Had you any passport?" On their answering, "No," he said, "Make haste home, or I will order you to the guard-house." He then smiled upon me, and said, "Go to your companions."

One night, as we were coming from the Foundry, a soldier met me and said, "Make haste home; for early in the morning you are to march for Canterbury and Dover." I was a little struck, and did not find my mind so passive in all things as it used to be. When I came to Deptford, I found the orders were come. We spent great part of the night in prayer and praise, and early on April 22d, with many tears, left our dear friends at Deptford.

Before we set out, my dear companion was fully persuaded that I should get out of the army. But he prayed that he might not live to see it. And he believed God would grant his request.

We stayed awhile at Canterbury, and met twice a day; but there was then no society there. Thence we marched to Dover Castle. Here I received a letter from Deptford, informing me that my dear friend would be glad to see me once more. Having procured a furlough for fourteen days, I set out on May 28th, about four in the afternoon, and, not

stopping, reached Deptford (sixty-seven miles) about four the next day. On the 12th of June (my permit being then out) I was married. The same day a letter from my officer informed me, that our regiment was embarking for Holland, and I must come immediately. So I took leave of my wife and friends on my wedding-day, and set out without delay. The next day we began our march to Gravesend, where the transports lay. We embarked on the 20th of June, with a fair wind. But when we were within sight of land, the ship wherein I was stuck fast upon the sand-bank: we lay rolling about, every moment expecting the ship to break. Many of the soldiers cried to God for mercy: our little company, seizing the opportunity, exhorted them to forsake sin, and turn to God; which they promised to do, if He would please to spare them. All this time my soul was truly happy. I had peace with God, and rejoiced with joy unspeakable.

While preparation was making to save as many as possible, when the ship should sink, she gave a spring, and got off the bank; and in a few hours we came safe to Williamstadt. We marched immediately to camp, (it being the latter end of June,) being commanded by Prince Charles of Lorraine. In a few days we came within sight of the French army. My wife had desired me to apply for my discharge. But I thought this was not the proper time, as we expected a battle every day, lest I should seem afraid to fight, and so bring a scandal upon the Gospel.

But we found those of our society that had been in Scotland had lost their simplicity, and zeal for God; and, instead of that, spent all their time in disputing about this and the other doctrine. But

blessed be God ! He kept all in our regiment of one heart and of one mind. We were almost always in sight of the French, they watching our motions, and we theirs. Meantime provisions were both scarce and dear ; but I did not now dare to plunder. We marched through orchards and vineyards, where there was plenty of fruit, which I knew would be taken away in a few hours. But as faint as I was, I durst not touch it, because it was not my own.

All this campaign I had a solid dependence on God, and a thankful remembrance of all His mercies. And everything which I had I received as from the immediate hand of God. One day, as we were marching, the bread-waggons did not reach us in time ; and we were in great want of bread and of all provisions, while, being on our march in sight of the enemy, we expected a battle every hour. We wanted water likewise ; and here we saw the difference between them that feared God, and them that did not. The latter cursed the king, and blasphemed God. And how did they groan and fret under their hardships ! On the contrary, the former could cheerfully say, "The will of the Lord be done." My soul was more than usually happy, rejoicing in God my Saviour. I felt much love and pity to my poor fellow-soldiers, and exhorted them to turn to God, and then they would find themselves happy under every trying circumstance.

As I was marching in the ranks, I felt hunger bite hard, but had not a murmuring thought. I lifted up my heart to God, and knew He could supply all my wants. I had not gone far, before I found a piece of brown bread, which I picked up, and received as out of the hand of God. We had but little rest : we kept Maestricht in our rear, as a place of retreat,



if needed. And all our provisions came that way. This the French knew, and laboured to cut off our communication with it. The season began to be cold, and the two armies were so near together, that whichever retreated first would be sure to suffer greatly. The French began to cut off our supplies. Prince Charles, observing this, thought it high time to prepare for a retreat into our winter-quarters. So he ordered that a strong party should advance in front of the army, to keep the French in play, and make them believe he intended a general action. This consisted of two English regiments, whereof ours was one, with some Hanoverians and some Dutch, making in the whole about twelve thousand men. On September 30th we had orders to hold ourselves in readiness, and after gun-firing to leave our tents standing, and march silently about a mile in the front of the camp. Prince Charles ordered our commander to go to such a distance and fortify his men ; and to keep his post till further orders, or till he could keep it no longer.

We all thought the army was to cover us, in order to bring on a general engagement. But they were ordered to retreat, with our cannon and baggage, to the other side of the town. This was done by two o'clock the next day. We advanced according to order, after my companion had given me to understand that we were to be parted that day. As soon as we came to the place appointed, we were drawn up in line of battle. We English posted ourselves in some gardens and orchards, which were some little cover. At day-break the whole French army advanced in seven or eight columns, all covered with horse on the right and left. They advanced slowly, while the Queen of Hungary's light-horse and theirs

skirmished between us and them. Here we lay, waiting for orders to retreat to our army. But the prince forgot to send them, being busy with his cups and his ladies. So our brave general kept the field all day, in spite of the whole French army. I bless God I found no fear, but constant peace, and my spirit rejoiced in God. While we lay on our arms, I had both time and opportunity to reprove the wicked. And they would bear it now, and made great promises, if God should spare them, of becoming new men. By this time the French came very near us, and a cannon-ball came straight up our rank. But, as we were lying upon the ground, it went over our heads. We then had orders to stand up and fire. The right of the French being closely engaged with the Dutch, the French centre advanced, and fired on us and the other English regiment. The rest of the French inclined to the right of us, in order to get round us. They quickly took our two pieces of cannon, and immediately turned them upon us. We were then ordered to retire with all speed into the plain, where we expected to find our own army. But they were far enough off, their general taking no thought for us.

All this time I found a constant waiting upon God. All fear was removed. I had no tremor on my spirits, and the presence of God was with me all the day long. My dear companion was on my right hand, and had been all the night. As we were both in the front rank, a musket-ball came and went through his leg. He fell down at my feet, looked up in my face with a smile, and said, "My dear, I am wounded." I and another took him in our arms, and carried him out of the ranks, while he was exhorting me to stand fast in the Lord. We laid

him down, took our leave of him, and fell into our ranks again. In our farther retreat, I again met with my dear friend, who had received another ball through his thigh. But his heart was full of love, and his eyes full of heaven. I may justly say, "Here fell a great Christian, a good soldier, a faithful friend." I was obliged to leave him; for the French pressed hard upon us. Yet I was enabled to say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord." I trust I have seen many that were perfected in love; but none so full of it as my dear companion. He was always cheerful, but never light; always in prayer, but a man of few words. Not a thoughtless look or an idle word could be observed in him. Even to this day, when I think of him, it is both with pleasure and profit.

Night came on, but, the French still pressing upon us, we retreated all night, till we came near Maestricht. It rained very hard, being the 30th of September, and was exceedingly cold. Toward morning, being out of the reach of the French, we had orders to halt. We had no tents, and it continued raining: however, being well tired, I lay down on the wet ground, put my knapsack under my head, and soon fell fast asleep. In the morning we had orders to march and join the grand army. The small remains of those whose lives had been so vilely thrown away did so without delay.

But now I began to miss my companion. It seemed as if I had lost part of myself. I could have wished, that I had died by his side; but I found I must look up, or I should sink into deep waters. I cried unto God, and He heard my prayer, and turned my heaviness into joy. After a few days, we marched to our

winter-quarters, which were at Bois-le-duc, in Holland. About this time I received letters from my wife, begging me to apply for my discharge, and she would send whatever money was wanting. I made this a matter of earnest prayer, and, after several steps, procured a promise from our colonel to discharge me for fifteen guineas. I wrote to my wife, and she sent a note, which was readily accepted. But in the mean time Colonel Philips sold his commission. Our new colonel consented to discharge me for the same sum, on condition I would be his servant till we came to England. But just at that time I fell ill of a fever, and orders came for our regiment to be clothed, and to take the field. But no clothing came for me, and my arms were taken from me. I was still very ill, when the colonel told me he would set out for England in a few weeks: "And if you are not able to go, I must leave you behind me." This threw me into much heaviness; but I cried to the Lord, and He soon turned it into joy. The fever instantly left me, and, by the time appointed, I was able to attend on the colonel. My brethren and I spent great part of the night in commending each other to God. I attended the colonel to Helvoetsluys, went on board the packet, and landed at Harwich in eight-and-forty hours; and on February 22d, 1748, found my wife and all my friends well at Deptford.

About this time, John Hyatt and I, with two more, being one night met together at the preaching-room, one Richardson, a sailor, who once ran well, but had for some time turned back to folly, earnestly desired to meet with us. The more we prayed for him, the more his sorrows increased; till his cries were so loud, they almost drowned our

voices. After the rest, I began to pray a second time. He fell back, and began beating himself against the floor, so that we could hardly hold him down. I prayed on. Suddenly he gave a spring out of our hands, jumped up, clasped his hands, and cried out, "He is come! He is come! Jesus is mine! My soul is happy!" By this many of the neighbours burst in, thinking we were killing one another. He went home rejoicing in the Lord, and in two or three days went to sea. But we never heard of him since. So I trust he is gone to paradise.

In the midst of much outward reproach, I now felt many inward conflicts. I found the remains of inward corruption, and earnestly longed to be delivered from them. So much the more were evil reports spread, even by good men, who followed not with us; and I always observed, the more devoted to God we were, the more did the enemy rage.

The disturbances at the time of preaching were now so great, that I was obliged to apply to a magistrate. But after a few of the rioters were taken up, we had peace, and our congregation increased. I then appointed a meeting on Thursday evenings, wherein I read part of one of your sermons. Some of your preachers likewise came down from London, and the congregations increased so that the room could not contain them. I consulted you. You advised me to get a piece of ground, and build. I immediately opened a subscription, and having procured ground, desired three builders to give in their proposals. This was in the year 1757. As soon as the building was finished, (which, with the galleries, cost two hundred and twenty-five pounds,) I paid the master-builder what I could, and offered him a

note for the rest. He said, "No; your word is sufficient." I was also in debt to my mealmen; yet I durst not withhold my hand from the cause of God and the poor, though I stood alone, not having one to help, or stand engaged with me.

It was about six years before I could discharge this debt: I then gave up the lease to you. I had for some time had thoughts of preaching, but they were now stronger than ever. So I gave now and then a few words of exhortation; and I was so engaged herein, I could not retreat. Whenever I thought of desisting, I was unhappy. I then made it matter of earnest prayer, till I durst delay no longer; but, with much fear and trembling, undertook to preach on those nights when the preachers did not come, though my fear was so great, that it sometimes affected my body. For some time I preached at Deptford only; but on my signifying my desires to you, you accepted me, and gave me a little to do in town.

My time was now fully employed. I had my own business to mind, together with that of the society. I was preacher, steward, visiter of the sick, and leader of the bands and classes. Mean time I had many reproaches, both from others, and from our own people. But God blessed me in all these things, and gave me to see some fruit of my labour. For from time to time some were convinced of sin, and others justified. And, indeed, had it not been for this encouragement, I could not have continued to preach.

In the year 1760 both my labours and my trials increased. I was made one of the four constables of our parish; and on October 27th I was sent for to the bench to be sworn in. Many laughed, and



many gazed at me as a monster; but my soul was composed and happy in God. When they called me to take the oath, I told them, "I cannot in conscience." One from the bench cried out, "Fine him twenty pounds, and he will swear anything." I answered him, "No, sir, not for twenty worlds." After many more words, the chairman said, "Mr. Staniforth, shall I make an oath for you?" I said, "Sir, if you please." He then proposed the following, to which I had no objection:—"Sampson Staniforth, of the parish of Greenwich, is by us appointed to serve the office of constable for one year, in the best manner he can, according to his own way of thinking."

When we were dismissed, I gave my partners to understand that I should be punctual in the execution of my office. And one of them being a great swearer, I told him, "You must not swear before me, as I will make you pay for it." When the Quarter Sessions came on, the high-constable summoned all the constables in the hundred (four-and-twenty) to meet. When I came into the room, one and another cried out, "No swearing now!" After dinner they drank the king's health, which I drank; and a second, which I drank in water. The next man cried with a loud voice, "Here is Dr. Squintum's health." When it came to me I stopped, and he said, "What, Mr. Staniforth, will you not drink that health?" I answered, "I pray God to bless that good man, and give him health and length of days." I then left the room. And from that time they left me to do just as I would. This was a trying year; but God enabled me to give satisfaction to the parish, while I found His presence always with me, and my soul prospered much.

I was the next year overseer of the poor ; but I had three good partners, and passed through the year with great ease.

About this time I had a remarkable deliverance. There was a heavy brick building belonging to my house, and that of my neighbour. Just as I came out of it one day it fell down : had it been a minute sooner, I should have been buried in the ruins.

It was now that the great revival of the work of God began. Observing some wildfire mixed with that holy and heavenly flame, I endeavoured gently to check it both in public and private, exhorting all to keep close to the written word ; to hold fast whatever was agreeable to the Scriptures, and let all the rest go.

In the year 1764 I was sent for by Mr. M. to his house. The messenger told me he wanted to speak with me, and I must come immediately. When I came, I found the Grecian bishop with him, who ordained me and three more. But, finding it would offend my brethren, I have never availed myself of it to this hour.

God now gave me, what I had so long desired, to owe no man anything ; and I went on cheerfully, though not without many temptations, both within and without. But I still resolved to lay out myself and my substance for the cause of God and the good of souls. And He was still pleased to give me some tokens for good, both in preaching and visiting the sick.

There now came into our neighbourhood one Mr. B., a Dissenting minister, a man of strong sense and great learning. He applied to me to serve him with bread. He was open and free in his conversation, but of a warm temper. He often called upon

me, and we commonly got into dispute, particularly about original sin and justification, in which I always found great freedom of speech and enlargement of heart. One night he stayed to supper; and as he declined it, I asked a blessing, concluding as usual with "for the sake of Jesus Christ." Observing he smiled, I said after supper, "Sir, is it not for His sake that we receive every blessing?" This introduced a warm dispute, till he rose up in a great rage, and, striking his hand upon the table, said, "I expect no more benefit from the blood of Christ, than from the blood of a bull." From this time we did not converse together, till he fell sick, and was visited by Mr. Dornford. He asked him whether he knew Mr. Staniforth, and begged he would send me to him. Mr. Dornford told me; but before he spoke, a letter came, desiring me to come immediately. He received me with great kindness. I spoke to him of the nature and necessity of repentance, and showed it was needful to feel our original corruption, as well as our actual sins. While I was speaking, the tears ran down his cheeks, and my soul was much drawn out to God for him. I asked, "Shall I go to prayer?" He said, "By all means; and may God hear your prayer!" Afterwards he said, "Dear Mr. Staniforth, my time is short: be with me as much as you can." This was Thursday. On Friday I went again, both morning and afternoon. I spoke closely to him, and repeated what he said at my house. He said, "I thank God and you that I see my error. O, pray for me!" On Saturday likewise I was with him twice; and he felt more and more the need of a Saviour. I then said, "Christ must be equal with the Father, or He cannot atone for our sins." He answered, "He is; and I believe

He is able to save all that come to God through Him." We then prayed to Him with joy and confidence, and praised God together. On Sunday I was with him twice. The second time (which was about eight in the evening) he said, he should live but a few hours. I asked, "What is the ground of your hope of heaven?" He replied, "The mercy of God through the merits of my dear Redeemer; and my soul is happy in Him." I said, "Then your sentiments are greatly changed." He said, "Yes; blessed be God for His grace, and you as His instrument. I now know there is no way of salvation but through Jesus Christ." He kissed my hand, and about eight hours after gave up his soul to God.

I now began to be more employed in and about London. Every Sunday morning I walked thither to meet the preachers, and to know my appointments. I had six miles to walk all weathers; and in the winter, to go and come in the dark, as I was always in town at eight in the morning, and took care to be at every place where I was appointed. And I had many sweet hours of communion with God as I walked by the way. I made it a rule, from the beginning to this day, to bear my own expenses. This cost me ten or twelve pounds a year; and I bless God I can bear it. Beside meeting the class and band, and visiting the sick, I preach five or six times in the week. And the Lord gives me to rejoice, in that I can still say, "These hands have ministered to my necessities."

In the year 1771 we began preaching at Rotherhithe. I went in my turn, and found my heart much united to the people. So was theirs to me. The place we preached in being both dear and

inconvenient, they thought of building, and applied to me concerning it. I laid the case before you. You encouraged me to go on; and said you could not do much, but you would help me as far as you could. I took a piece of ground, and set the workmen about the building, which cost in all near two hundred pounds. For this I alone stood engaged. I lent upwards of a hundred pounds, and was near eight years before I could get the building entirely out of debt. I still constantly preach there once a week, and every first Sunday in the month. I soon saw some fruit of my labours here also. W. C. being convinced of sin, and under the afflicting hand of God, I desired our friends, both at Rotherhithe and Deptford, to set apart a day of prayer on his behalf. God heard the prayer, restored him to his right mind, and filled his heart with love. About the same time, Samuel Gibbs was convinced of sin, and soon after converted to God. He was afterwards settled at Snowsfields, and became eminently useful. He died happy in January, 1781, and I preached his funeral sermon.

I was still frequently tempted to leave off preaching; but generally when the temptation was strongest, I was informed of another and another that had received a blessing. Glory be to God, who does not send us a warfare at our own cost! I was now likewise blessed in temporal things, having enough both to answer all demands, and, if I was called away, to leave a little to my wife, who has for many years laboured under a severe asthma, and been thereby cut off from all the public means of grace. For her sake I began to preach in my own house every Monday evening. And hereby I have reason to believe some good has been done to others also. Several of

my neighbours come to hear me, send for me when they are sick, and will do nothing in the way of charity without me.

About this time I had several invitations to leave the Connexion: one offered me forty pounds a year, another fifty; urging that I might hereby save myself much fatigue, as well as considerable expense. But whenever I thought closely upon the subject, three objections occurred. 1. It was clear God had blessed me in this way; therefore I was afraid to go out of it. 2. I saw how much hurt had been done in the society by these separations. And, 3, as to money or ease, my heart is not set on money, and I am not weary of my labour. So upon the coolest reflection I can still say, and that with full purpose of heart, "This people shall be my people, and their God shall be my God."

What farther God has for me to do in His cause, and for the good of souls, I know not. But I trust He will enable me to be more thankful for every mercy, more faithful to grace given, and more fruitful in those few days which He may please to add to my life.

My present method is, I pray with my wife before I go out in the morning, and at breakfast time with my family and all that are in the house: the former part of the day I spend in my business; my spare hours in reading, and private exercises. Most evenings I preach; so that I am seldom at home before nine o'clock: but though I am so much out at nights, and generally alone, God keeps me both from evil men and evil spirits. And many times I am as fresh when I come in at night as I was when I went out in the morning. I conclude the day in reading the Scriptures, and in praying with my family.



I am now in the sixty-third year of my age; and, glory be to God! I am not weary of well-doing. I find my desires after God stronger than ever; my understanding is more clear in the things of God; and my heart is united more than ever, both to God and His people. I know their religion and mine is the gift of God through Christ, and the work of God by His Spirit. It is revealed in Scripture, and is received and retained by faith, in the use of all Gospel ordinances. It consists in an entire deadness to the world, and to our own will; and an entire devotedness of our souls, bodies, time, and substance to God through Christ Jesus. In other words, it is the loving the Lord our God with all our hearts, and all mankind for God's sake. This arises from a knowledge of His love to us: "We love Him because we know He first loved us;" a sense of which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost that is given to us: from the little hereof that I have experienced, I know, he that experiences this religion is a happy man. Two verses in one of our hymns exactly describe what I now feel, and what I desire:—

"If so poor a worm as I  
 May to Thy great glory live,  
 All my actions sanctify,  
 All my words and thoughts receive!  
 Claim me, for Thy service, claim  
 All I have, and all I am.

"Take my soul and body's powers,  
 Take my memory, mind, and will,  
 All my goods, and all my hours,  
 All I know, and all I feel:  
 All I think, and speak, and do:  
 Take my heart,—but make it new!"

Thus, Rev. and dear Sir, I have given you a little sketch of God's dealings with me. May the Lord bless you with length of days and much happiness! So prays

Your much obliged son and servant  
in the Gospel,

SAMPSON STANIFORTH.

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TO THE EDITOR OF THE "METHODIST MAGAZINE."

LONDON, *April 3d*, 1799.

THE holy apostle exhorts us to hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end: hence we may safely conclude, that this is the will of the Lord concerning us. But all that are brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God are not so happy as to take the apostle's advice; and for this reason, some pious and prudent people have objected to the publishing any account of the Lord's gracious dealings with us, till we have finished our Christian warfare, lest we should dishonour our profession. Nevertheless we have abundant reason to praise the Lord that there are many who, from the time that they first tasted of the good word of God, and felt the powers of the world to come, till they finished their Christian race, continued steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. And it is worthy our observation, that a great many whose lives have appeared in the "Methodist Magazine" have been of this number, and have joyfully testified with their dying breath, that God had followed them with mercy and loving-kindness all their days, and that they could then cheerfully give up themselves into His hand, firmly

believing that they should be happy with Him for ever.

As some account of the Lord's dealings with that good soldier and faithful servant of God, Mr. Sampson Staniforth, was published in the Magazine for 1783, it will afford your pious readers pleasure to hear, that he finished his course with joy.

After he gave up his business, he removed from Deptford to Shoreham, at the desire of the pious and venerable Mr. Perronet, where Mr. Staniforth was made very useful among the little flock in that place; but he returned to Deptford, to his old friends, a few years back, where he spent a great part of his time in visiting the sick and the poor, and such as were in distress. Those who were in want he relieved according to his ability. He was a man who for many years had the glory of God in view, and the salvation of souls very much at heart; and he spared no pains in gathering poor wandering sinners into the fold of Christ, and encouraging those who were brought in, to press forward towards the mark, that they might obtain the prize of their high calling. He was of a remarkably calm, mild temper, and of a peaceable and healing spirit; and was exceedingly useful in promoting peace and love among the people. He has long been a father to the Deptford society, as well as to some others in that neighbourhood.

When the infirmities of age came upon him, he bore them with entire resignation to the will of that God whose mercy and love in Christ Jesus he had long and so largely experienced. And when visited with affliction (which he frequently was for several years before his death) he possessed his soul in patience, and looked to the hour of his dissolution with joyful expectation of being for ever with the

Lord. He was neither molested with gloomy doubts, nor painful fears; nor was the enemy of souls permitted to distress him. But as his heart stood fast, believing in the Lord, so his evidence for heaven continued unclouded to the last moment of life. He said to a dear friend, a few days before his happy spirit took its flight, "I think my experience may be all summed up in these few words,—

‘In the heavenly Lamb,  
Thrice happy I am;

And my heart it doth dance at the sound of His name.’”

The night before he died, a friend was sent for to wake with and attend upon him; who, when he came into his room, asked Mr. Staniforth how he was. He replied, "I am exceedingly ill, and I thought I was going home." He then repeated many particular passages from our hymns, and among the rest the following:—

“O for a heart to praise my God,  
A heart from sin set free!  
A heart that always feels Thy blood,  
So freely spilt for me!”

And soon after,

“My God, I am Thine,  
What a comfort Divine,

What a blessing, to know that my Jesus is mine!”

And added, "O, what a mercy to have God to go to in a time of trouble!" Seeing his servant standing by, he said, "Seek the Lord while He may be found, and hold fast the beginning of your confidence steadfast to the end. The Lord bless you. May all the blessings which the Lord poured out upon the head of Joseph be poured out upon you!" and very soon after he calmly and quietly breathed his last.

Thus died Sampson Staniforth, who had steadily

walked with God for nearly sixty years. He preached the Gospel for almost fifty years, and finished his course in the seventy-ninth year of his age. The little property he had left, having no children, he gave by will to his relations. But it was remarked by many, that not one of his Christian friends was invited to his funeral: yet the preachers in town willingly attended him to the grave, though not invited; so did several of those who loved him from Deptford; and the society showed their affection for their deceased and faithful minister, by putting the whole chapel in mourning on the occasion. So exceedingly little do distant relations in general think themselves obliged to their deceased friends for anything they leave behind them. How much more commendable is it to dispose of our property at death for the honour of God, as He inclined us to do while living!

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### EXTEMPORE LINES

ON THE DEATH OF MR. SAMPSON STANIFORTH,  
OF DEPTFORD.

SAMPSON, in youth—like the unbroken steed—  
With British soldiers, rank'd in flaming red,  
To Flanders march'd to meet the Gallic foe :—  
'Twas there the youth first learn'd himself to know.  
Back to his native country he returns;  
A different flame now in his bosom burns.  
Discharged from royal William's loyal band,  
Enlists, in Jesu's nobler ranks to stand.  
No changeling he;—firm in his Master's cause;  
A Bible-Christian;—subject to its laws;  
A soldier, husband, Christian, man of worth,  
Such died the venerable STANIFORTH.

G. W.

THE LIFE  
OF  
MR. THOMAS LEE.

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WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

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1. I WAS born in May, in the year 1727, at a small village in the parish of Keighley, Yorkshire. When I was four years old, my mother died, and I was removed to her brother's, at Long-Addingham. Here I was carefully restrained from outward sin : yet I often felt an inclination to it ; particularly to swear, which one day I did : but, blessed be God, He struck me with so deep a conviction, that I never swore again from that day, nor had the least inclination to it. About fourteen, I was bound apprentice to one of the worsted trade, and was by a kind Providence placed in a family where I wanted nothing that was needful either for body or soul.

2. From my early days, the Lord was at times powerfully working upon my soul. From ten or eleven years of age, I was exceedingly distressed. I generally saw, as I thought, hell before me, and believed it was to be my portion. The words "everlasting" and "eternity" were much upon my mind, insomuch that my life became a burden to me. For,



on the one hand, hell appeared intolerable ; and, on the other, I found no delight in the service of God ; so that my days were consumed in trouble. Frequently did I murmur against God, and often wished to be annihilated.

3. In this state I continued till I was fourteen, though with some intervals. I was then a little more at ease, and followed what are called “recreations.” But from fifteen I was more inclined to reading, and for some time spent all my vacant hours in reading Scripture ; and took much pleasure therein. Between sixteen and seventeen I found much delight in prayer, and had many inward consolations, though I had never then heard anyone speak of the comforts of the Holy Ghost. But, having none to speak to about these things, they gradually died away. From seventeen to nineteen was the most careless part of my life. I now sought pleasure in mirth and company. But the Lord generally disappointed me, and made it bitter to my soul. I could not find any companions to my mind. I sought mirth ; but I thought they carried it to excess. And I could not bear their taking the name of God in vain. Hence I had much sorrow at times ; likewise, the looking back, and seeing what seriousness I had fallen from cut me to the heart.

4. During this time I now and then heard that blessed man, Mr. Grimshaw, and made good resolutions ; but they lasted not long. Meanwhile I had heard of a people called Methodists ; but I was little concerned about them, till I heard some of them preach. I liked them well, and heard them more and more frequently. And though I was not deeply affected under any particular sermon, yet my conscience was gradually enlightened, by hearing, and

reading, and conversing, and praying, till I resolved to cast in my lot among them. From that time my heart was so united to them, that all at once I dropped all my former companions. And, blessed be God, from that hour I have never had one desire to turn back.

5. I now loved the Bible more than ever, particularly the New Testament. This was my daily companion; and in reading and meditating upon it I found great delight. And hereby I was delivered from a temptation to think, "These are the false prophets we are bidden to be aware of." This vanished away, when I compared their doctrines and practice with my Bible. And my judgment was more fully and clearly informed of all the essential doctrines of Christianity. And in the use of these means, God frequently met me, and comforted my soul. Indeed, the doctrine of salvation by grace was unspeakably comfortable to me. Yet, shortly after, I sunk almost all at once into a desponding state, which continued more than a year. And though during this time I was often comforted, both under the word and in prayer, yet I do not remember passing four-and-twenty hours together without being some part of the time in despair.

6. In this period I was continually tempted to think myself a hypocrite. Once I mentioned this to a friend, but got no comfort at all, which shut my mouth for a long time. It is impossible to express the anguish I felt. I longed for death, though I knew I was not fit for it. But in the midst of all, I constantly heard the preaching at all opportunities, and never omitted prayer. When I could say nothing, I groaned before God; resolving if I perished, (as I expected to do,) it should be in the means of grace.

7. Yet even in this period the Lord did not leave me. As I was one night on my knees groaning before Him, those words were powerfully applied to my soul, "Thou shalt bear My name before much people." And this impression never after left my mind long together, which often constrained me to hope that the Lord would some time help me. Also, during all this time, I had favour with my master and mistress and all the family; although they did not much like the people to whom I belonged. Toward the end of this gloomy season, one evening, when sitting in the house, I took courage, rose up, and desired we might have family prayer. I kneeled down, and so did all the family, and prayed with great freedom. And I continued it, though only an apprentice; which proved a great blessing to my own soul. For it kept me watchful all the day long, lest my prayer and my life should contradict each other.

8. Soon after I was desired to pray in another family, which I did several times. I had now more hope; and one day, being alone great part of the day, and much engaged in meditation and prayer, I found a persuasion that God was willing to receive me. I left my business immediately, and went to prayer. In a moment God broke in upon my soul in so wonderful a manner, that I could no longer doubt of His forgiving love. I cried, "My Lord and my God!" And in the spirit I was then in, I could have praised, and loved, and waited to all eternity.

9. Before this, I had attended several meetings for prayer. I was now, unawares, brought to conduct those meetings, and sometimes to speak a few words in His name whom I loved. When the meetings were over, others asked me to come to their houses, which I promised to do. But when I came

home, I feared I had gone too far, and resolved to make no more such promises. One night as I was going to a neighbour's house, one of my master's daughters, who was going with me, said, "My father and mother are not pleased with your proceedings." I asked, "Why, what have I done?" She said, "They would not have you go to such houses. But if you think it is your duty to keep meetings in the neighbourhood, they would have you keep them at home."

10. That night my soul was greatly comforted, and I gave notice of speaking at home on Sunday evening. We had abundance of people, and neither my master nor mistress seemed to be at all displeased. They loved me dearly, and let me go wherever I would. But in the midst of all these outward blessings, I had many inward trials. Sometimes I doubted of my state; sometimes I feared I had run before I was sent; and many times said, with Jeremiah, "I will speak no more in this name." And thus I continued for several months, though many were blessed and comforted in hearing me. Frequently I consulted my dear friend Mr. Grimshaw, who strongly exhorted me not to be faint or weary, but to go on valiantly in the work to which God had called me.

11. About this time I was invited to go to Harding-Moor, Lingbobin near Wilsdon, and Thornton above Bradford. As these were places where no one had preached yet, I thought if God would own me here, and raise up a people for Himself, I shall know that He hath sent me. He did so; many found peace with God, and a society was raised at each place. After delivering these up to the travelling preachers, I went to Long-Addingham. There

also God was pleased to set to His seal. A society was quickly raised. Many sinners were convinced, and several of them truly converted to God.

12. During all this time I wrought exceedingly hard at my own business when I was at home ; but the going up and down to preach frequently took up more than half my time. After a while, Providence called me to Greenough-Hill, to Hartwith, and some other places ; at each of which it pleased God to raise up a people for Himself. After I had preached some time at Greenough-Hill, I was invited to Pateley-Bridge. Here I was called to an exercise of my faith which I had not hitherto known. The first time I was there, Mr. — had prepared and encouraged a numerous mob, who spared neither mud nor stones, with many strokes besides, so that they themselves owned, “ We have done enough to make an end of him.” I did, indeed, reel to and fro, and my head was broken with a stone. But I never found my soul more happy, nor was ever more composed in my closet. It was a glorious time ; and there are several who date their conversion from that day. After I was a little cleaned, I went to a neighbouring town, where, when my head was dressed, I preached abroad to abundance of people, many of whom had followed me from Pateley-Bridge. Some of the mob also followed : but, as the wretched minister was not present to head them, and as they were greatly out-numbered, they behaved peaceably ; and the Lord blessed us much.

13. Having now laboured near four years, and travelled generally on foot, having been often thoroughly wet, and obliged to keep on my wet clothes all day, and having frequently, when at home, worked at night, that I might not be burdensome to

any ; I found I was not so strong as formerly. And the number of places still increasing, I was obliged, though much against my will, to give up business, and buy a horse. Mr. Grimshaw now sent me into his Circuit for a month, sending another preacher in my place. Then I returned, and spent a considerable time together among the new societies.

14. In the year 1752, and during the winter following, the work of God prospered exceedingly ; but persecution raged on every side. The malice of the devil was chiefly levelled against me, as I was the first that disturbed his servants in these parts. So that wherever I went, I was in much danger, carrying as it were my life in my hand. One day, as I was going through Pateley, the captain of the mob, who was kept in constant pay, pursued me, and pulled me off my horse. The mob then soon collected about me ; and one or other struck up my heels (I believe, more than twenty times) upon the stones. They then dragged me into a house by the hair of the head ; then pushed me back, with one or two upon me, and threw me with the small of my back upon the edge of the stone stairs. This nearly broke my back ; and it was not well for many years after. Thence they dragged me down to the common sewer, which carries the dirt from the town to the river. They rolled me in it for some time ; then dragged me to the bridge, and threw me into the water. They had me mostly on the ground, my strength being quite spent.

15. My wife, with some friends, now came up. Seeing her busy about me, some asked, "What, are you a Methodist?" gave her several blows, which made her bleed at the mouth, and swore they would put her into the river. All this time I lay upon the

ground, the mob being undetermined what to do. Some cried out, "Make an end of him." Others were for sparing my life : but the dispute was cut short, by their agreeing to put some others into the water. So they took them away, leaving me and my wife together. She endeavoured to raise me up ; but, having no strength, I dropped down to the ground again. She got me up again, and supported me about an hundred yards ; then I was set on horseback, and made a shift to ride softly, as far as Michael Granger's house. Here I was stripped from head to foot, and was washed. I left my wet clothes here, and rode to Greenough-Hill, where many were waiting for me ; and, though much bruised and very weak, preached a short sermon, from Psalm xxxiv. 19 : " Many are the troubles of the righteous : but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."

16. The next morning I preached again. Afterwards several accompanied me a by-way to North-pasture. There were many serious hearers ; but the captain of the mob came, and made some disturbance, and then with a great stick broke every pane of glass in a large window. This made a little confusion at first ; but afterwards the Lord poured down His blessing in an uncommon manner. Almost all were in tears, and the people took joyfully the spoiling of their goods. Thence we rode to Hartwith, where we had peace, and the power of the Lord was with us. But when the work of the day was over, I was so bruised and sore, that I was obliged to be undressed by another.

17. This summer, autumn, and winter were times of hot persecution. Our friends frequently suffered, when they went upon business to Pateley-Bridge.



Their clothes were spoiled, and their persons much abused. They applied for justice to the Dean of Ripon, but found none. But what made amends was, we loved each other dearly, and had exceedingly comfortable seasons together. In January I was invited to preach about a mile from Pateley. When I came, the mob was gathered. However, in the name of the Lord I began; and though they blasphemed horribly, and broke the windows, I was not interrupted or discomposed, but prayed, preached, and concluded in peace. As soon as I had ended, they became outrageous. I retired into a chamber, and gave myself to prayer. While I was on my knees, one came and informed me, the mob had forced into the house, and would quickly be in the chamber; but that I must get out at the window, and there were some friends below, who would catch me as I fell.

18. In a while, being desired to preach there again, I fixed it in the day-time, thinking the mob would not leave their work to disturb us. But they soon came, and surrounded the house, so that I could not preach at all. After I had been kept prisoner for several hours, I was obliged to run for my life. About the same time I was invited to Garthit-Hall, where I preached in the open air with little interruption; but when I went again, the Pateley mob came, though the floods were out. When I began to preach, they were more and more violent, till I was forced to desist and retire. Being resolved I should not escape again, they surrounded the house till near sunset. Then they ran to beat one of the people. Our friends snatched the opportunity and brought me a horse, which I imme-

diately mounted. The mob seeing this left him, and pursued me. But again God delivered me out of their hands.

19. But hearing I was to preach some miles off, on the other side of the water, they immediately divided (it being a great flood) to the different bridges. This obliged us to ride many miles about. It being very dark, we lost our way upon the moors. We wandered till we were thoroughly wet with snow and rain; but late at night found our way to Thomas Lupton's. The congregation had waited for several hours, being in much trouble for fear I was killed. I changed my clothes, and, though it was late, preached to them as the Lord enabled me. It seemed to us little less than heaven; and though it was a hard day, it was a blessed day to my soul.

20. I remember once, during these seasons of trouble, wherein my life continually hung in suspense, a thought came into my mind, "It is hard to have no respite, to be thus perpetually suffering." Immediately it was impressed upon my mind, "Did you not, when you was on the borders of despair, promise the Lord, that if He would give you an assurance of His favour, you would count no suffering, sorrow, or affliction too great to be endured for His name's sake?" This at once silenced all murmuring; and thenceforth I bore whatever befell me with patience, and after with joy: finding a willingness to bear it, as long as He saw meet, if it were to the end of my life.

21. About this time, I had thirteen or fourteen places where I preached regularly. And I thought only of spending my life among them, when Mr. Grimshaw mentioned me to you. You sent for me, and asked, whether I was willing to be a travelling

preacher. I said "Yes, if Mr. Grimshaw would supply my places:" which he promised to do. That year I was most in the Birstal and Leeds Circuits: the next in the Leeds Circuit altogether, which then comprehended Sheffield, and York also; extending into Derbyshire on the south, to Hull on the east, and on the north as far as Newton, under Rosebury-Topping.

22. In the year 1758 I was stationed in Lincolnshire. The whole county, now divided into three, was then only in one Circuit. So I spent two months in the eastern part, and then two months in the western. I was in this Circuit about sixteen months in all. And I did not labour in vain. There was a very considerable increase in the societies, and many souls were brought to the saving knowledge of God. And though the rides were long, and the work was hard, yet all was made easy and comfortable. The Lord was greatly with us, and the people in general were loving and teachable; and I know not, if I shall ever love a people better on this side eternity.

23. Thence I removed into the Newcastle Circuit, which then included Edinburgh: to which we went, and back again in a fortnight, generally preaching night and morning. I found many trials in this Circuit, but the Lord delivered me out of all. The next year I was in the Manchester round, which then contained Lancashire, Cheshire, part of Shropshire, and of Wales, Staffordshire, and part of Derbyshire. Our labour was hard; but we saw much fruit of it, particularly at Manchester and Bolton. In the latter part of the year I was generally supposed to be far gone in a consumption. I was not careful about it, not doubting but if the Lord called

me, I should finish my course with joy. But it pleased God to restore my health and strength. May I still glorify Him with my body and my spirit!

24. After some years I went, accompanied with my wife, to Edinburgh. Mr. Hopper laboured with me. It was now Dr. Erskine published and recommended the eleven Letters, ascribed to Mr. Hervey. This occasioned a good deal of reproach for a time; after which I was called away to Newcastle. The weather was very severe. Day after day we had various storms, and were hardly able to preserve life. But the worst was, when we came to the steep descent from the mountains, called the Pease, where the hill had fallen into the deep road, and made it utterly impassable. This obliged us to creep along a path like a sheep-track, hanging over a deep vale. Meantime the snow and wind beat so furiously upon us, that we knew not if we should escape with life. After lodging at Old Cammus, (a most uncomfortable inn,) we went forward through sharp frost, heavy snow beating upon us, and miserable roads to Alnwick. From thence to Morpeth we had fair weather; but the next day was heavy rain, which attended us all the way to Newcastle. And here I remained, fully employed till the Manchester Conference.

25. In 1760 I was stationed at Epworth once more. This winter we were invited to Newark-upon-Trent. But we met with much opposition from riotous mobs, encouraged by great men. On the 24th of March they took the pulpit out of the preaching-house, and burned it in the market-place. I went thither on the 7th of April, with Mr. and Mrs. Pool, of North Scarle. The preaching was to begin at two o'clock; but a large mob was there

before I began. I prayed, and preached a short sermon. Toward the latter end of the discourse, they threw a large quantity of eggs filled with blood, and sealed with pitch, which made strange work wherever they alighted. When they had discharged these, they grew more outrageous still. We judged it best to send to the mayor. But, instead of coming to quell the riot, he sent an order for me to appear before him. In our way to the main street, there was a deep, muddy drain. They attempted to push me into it. But I caught hold of one of the mob, and held him so fast, that they could not push in one without the other. When we came to the mayor's, he sent for the town-clerk. I showed them the Act of Toleration, and the certificate of my licence, observing I had done nothing which was not warranted by law. After much conversation, our friends gave evidence against three of the rioters, who were bound over to the assizes.

26. Some thousands of the mob being gathered in the street, I requested the mayor to send an officer to guard me through them. He said, he would go himself. And he did go to the gate; but when I was gone out, immediately went back. I was presently surrounded; and they soon began to throw mire, clods of earth, and stones in abundance. This they continued to do, all down the street, till we came to the preaching-house. Our friends, judging there would be no safety there, brought my great coat into the stable, and advised me to mount and gallop through the mob, which I purposed to do. Accordingly, I mounted; but some of them held the gate, and others beat both me and my mare in so violent a manner, that I thought it would be best to dismount and go the back way. But here also the

mob met me, beat both me and the mare, and when I endeavoured to mount, pulled me back, and the mare got from me. Then they dragged me along, sometimes on my feet, and sometimes on the ground, to the side of the Trent, swearing they would throw me in. But they were not agreed to this; so they brought water, and poured it upon me from head to foot. A painter then came with his pot and brush, and laid it on plentifully. They still surrounded me, throwing dirt, and beating me till I could hardly stir. Then they offered to let me go, if I would promise never to come again. But this I could not do. Just then a man came cursing, swearing, and threatening, offended, it seemed, at their proceedings; at which most of them left me, and dispersed.

27. I rose up, and walked as well as I could down the Marsh, a few of the mob quietly walking with me. I found my mare in a standing water: I went in, took her, and rode off. Coming to a pond, I alighted, washed myself a little, and then went on to North Scarle; but it was hard work, as the night came on, and I was very wet, and exceedingly cold. When I got there, I procured some dry clothes, and the Lord gave me a quiet night. The next day I was very sore and weak: however, I sat up most of the day, and in a little time I recovered my strength, and had still more cause to trust and praise God.

28. On July 16th was our trial at Nottingham. But the grand jury, sparing the rioters all they could, would not find the bill for disturbing me at public worship, but only for assaulting me. They were accordingly bound over, to be tried for the assault at the next assizes. Meantime an innumerable mob was collected both within and without the court, threatening what they would do to me. I therefore

addressed the recorder for a guard. He immediately ordered two constables to conduct me safe to my lodging: the mob roared; but durst go no farther. So I returned home unmolested. At the following assizes several of the rioters were indicted: judge's warrants were issued out and executed. In October my counsel and the recorder agreed (to prevent all farther trouble) what each offender should pay, after making submission, and promising to offend no more. The recorder then gave them a very pertinent exhortation, and, hearing the Nottingham mob was collected again, sent two constables to guard me to my lodgings, and ordered them to give the people notice, that if any man offered to assault me, he would immediately send him to prison. Thus ended the troublesome affair at Newark. Since then the work of God has prospered greatly. And a convenient preaching-house has been built, in which numerous congregations meet without any disturbance.

29. Thus have I given you a few imperfect hints of the manner wherein our Lord has dealt with me. My whole life, particularly since I have known something of the saving power of religion, has been attended all along with manifold trials, a thousand times more than I have related: yet has the Lord been exceedingly gracious to me, the most unworthy of all His people. If I this moment saw all the sufferings I have had for His name's sake; if they were now spread before me, I would say, "Lord, if Thou wilt give me strength, I will now begin again, and Thou shalt add to them lions' dens, and fiery furnaces, and by Thy grace I will go through them all." My life, though attended with many crosses, has been a life of mercies.



For more than twenty years, I have rarely preached upon the controversy between the Calvinists and Arminians. But my judgment is fixed: I have no doubt, either of Christ's tasting death for every man, or of His being able and willing to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through Him. I count it one of the greatest favours, that He still allows me to do a little for Him, and that He in any measure owns the little which I am able to speak in His name. I beg that I may be humble at His feet all the days of my life, and may be more and more like Him whom my soul loveth, till at last I reign with Him in glory!

I am, dear Sir,

Your willing, though unworthy servant in  
the Gospel,

THOMAS LEE.

October 30th, 1779.

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*A short Account of the Death of Mr. Thomas Lee:  
in a Letter to the Rev. John Wesley; written by  
Mrs. Lee.*

REV. SIR,

My dear husband's last illness began with a pain in his foot, which soon went up into his leg. When he mentioned it, we thought it was the rheumatism, and applied many things to warm it. By these means it seemingly got better. After some time it ascended into his thigh, and became very exquisite. On the morning before he died, the violence of the pain abated a little; but in the afternoon grew worse again, yet we had no apprehension of his death.

The evening before he died, he expressed great resignation to the will of the Lord: though, as he said, the pains drank up his spirits. He said, "I am the Lord's; and I feel that I am united to Him; and I know I shall be with Him for ever!"

He preached twice the Sunday before he died; although he went to the preaching-house on crutches, and sat all the time he preached. His first text that day was, "All flesh is as grass, and the glory thereof is as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth, the flower thereof fadeth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you." His last text was, "Surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear the Lord," &c. In this sermon he said, "Perhaps this will be my last sermon:" and truly the power of the Lord was solemnly felt by most present. And, as if he saw his end was near, he gave out a funeral hymn. And when he came to those words,—

"By faith we already behold  
That lovely Jerusalem here;  
Her walls are of jasper and gold,  
As crystal her buildings are clear;"

he seemed to be quite transported at the thought of meeting Jesus.

The night in which he died, I went to bed as usual. But before I slept, the pain flew up to his heart. On this I arose, and called in George Eskrick. We raised him up, and put something in his mouth, which came out again. He was so sensible, as to take my handkerchief to wipe it up. We laid him down again. He sobbed several times, looked up once, and smiled; closed his eyes, and gently fell asleep.

A few months before, he told me he had never such a view of God's love towards him as he had that morning in prayer. The following words were then made a great blessing to him: "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine." From that time I believe he never had a shadow of doubt on his mind concerning his eternal welfare.

I am, Rev. Sir,

Yours affectionately,

MARY LEE.

BOLTON, *September 9th*, 1786.

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IN the Minutes of Conference for the year 1787 Mr. Wesley describes Mr. Lee as a "faithful brother, and a good old soldier of Jesus Christ."

THE LIFE  
OF  
MR. JOHN PRICKARD.

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WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

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I WAS born in New-Mote, in Pembrokeshire, on the 3d of August, 1744. That village was then the freest from vice I ever saw. This circumstance I have reason to be thankful for, as I spent the greatest part of my childhood without seeing or hearing much of outward wickedness.

When I was about nine years old my father removed, with all his family, to Creswell-Quay, in the same county, where he has lived ever since. There the scene was sadly changed : it being a creek of Milford Haven, where a vast quantity of coals is shipped off, the great resort of sailors and of other strangers introduced cursing, swearing, and Sabbath-breaking, with many foolish and wicked amusements.

My parents (who were religiously disposed) restrained their children as much as possible from the company of wicked children ; and, by that means, through the blessing of God, we were kept from outward wickedness. Nevertheless, I sometimes took the advantage of their absence, (when they have

been gone to hear the word,) and have played in the streets, or else gone a pleasuring on the water, on a Sabbath-day. I was also much inclined to go to cock-fightings and other amusements, but was happily prevented.

I lived with my parents till I was about seventeen, during which time I had frequent drawings of the Spirit of God, and many severe reproaches of conscience. Very often did I hear the word with pleasure, especially from Mr. Whitefield and Mr. Howel Davies, and believed all the truth so far as I was instructed : indeed, I believed more than the truth, more than I can believe now ; for I was a thorough Predestinarian, not hesitating even at reprobation ! But all this time I was a stranger to God and my own heart.

In the latter end of the year 1761 I removed to Brecon, to an uncle. He at that time disliked the Methodists, thinking it sufficient to go to church twice on Sundays ; which he did, and obliged all his family to do the same. But he laid no restraint on me. I might go to hear the Methodists if I chose. But as I was now got from under the tuition of my parents, and being rather ashamed of the cross, I neglected the preaching entirely. Nor was this all ; for (being free from outward restraint) I fell into open sin, such as swearing, cursing, breaking the Sabbath, and sometimes (for the sake of company) I drank to excess.

At first I felt some remorse of conscience, but soon found that sin hardeneth the heart. For after awhile I became an habitual swearer, and gave my mind up to vanity. I went on thus for three years and upwards, though I had frequent checks of conscience, and always believed that if I did not mend

my ways, I must go to hell ; yea, I often resolved in my own mind, that I must be a Christian indeed, be born of God, or I could not be saved. I therefore fully intended to be truly religious, and to be a Methodist, when I was settled in the world. Indeed, though I never was so uncharitable as to think that none could be saved but they, yet (as I believed them to be the most scriptural in their sentiments of any I knew) I always thought it my duty to join them some time or other. Thus I held a good part of the truth in unrighteousness ; yet I went so far as to dispute warmly with my cousin in its defence, and often confuted him by quotations out of the Common Prayer-book. But, alas ! I was all this time ashamed of the people I knew to be the children of God, and also an enemy to God both in heart and in life.

When I was a little turned twenty, my eldest cousin (a sober, industrious, sensible young man) died of consumption. He lingered above a year, and had constant hopes of recovery ; but being at length confined to his bed, he gave up all hopes of life. About four days before he died, his father was in the room with him, and heard him burst out into a sudden bewailing of his sins. His father said, " My dear, you have led a regular, sober life, and there can be no fear of you : if you are not safe, what will become of such a sinner as I, and thousands more ? " His son replied, " But I have been a negligent sinner," and refused to be comforted by all his father could say. The day he died (his father being still in the room with him) he lay quiet for a considerable time, till he heard the clock strike one. He then lifted himself up on his pillow, (though he had not been able to turn in bed for many days

before,) and cried out, "O, happy hour! happy hour!" and presently died. Thus God made one a dying witness of the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins, who did not believe the doctrine till a very little before his death.

This extraordinary death of so near a relation was a loud call to all the house, and to me in particular. But though it made some impression on me for a short season, it soon vanished away.

Soon after I heard an alarming sermon preached in our church upon the day of judgment. I was cut to the heart, and could get no rest all the afternoon. But I banished the impressions in the evening by going into company. Yet while I was there I had hard work to get rid of the sermon; the day of judgment still stared me in the face.

The summer following I fell into a decline, and lingered for some months. About the beginning of September, as I lay in my bed one night, all of a sudden the following thoughts struck me:—"My cousin died of this disorder last winter; and it is hardly possible that I shall live till spring. What! and must I die so soon? Then, as sure as I am now alive, I shall go to hell! Alas! I deserve nothing less; I can expect nothing less!" Then waiting for the young man who lay with me to go to sleep, I arose, and went to prayer, and besought the Lord to restore me to health; and solemnly promised that if He did, I would immediately turn to Him, hear His word, and own His people. And (O wonderful goodness!) He heard me, and gave me another trial; for in less than a fortnight I was better; and before winter set in, was quite recovered.

But alas! I did not keep my promise. It is true,



I heard the Methodists all the winter ; but as I recovered, my serious impressions wore off to such a degree, that when the days lengthened, (so that we must go by daylight to the preaching,) I was ashamed to go ! I also broke off all outward sins for a time ; but when I got quite out of danger, I returned to them again with greater greediness than ever ; and thus I continued all that year.

Early in the following spring I went to see my parents ; but all the time I was at home I behaved very undutifully, in refusing to be restrained from going to cock-fightings, &c. When they persuaded me with great tenderness, I had the audacity to tell them, (though against my conscience,) that they were as bigoted as Papists ! But I severely smarted for this before I found the Lord.

Some time after I returned to Brecon, I was providentially led to hear Mr. C. ; and being cut to the heart, I once more sought the Lord in earnest for a short time, and then fell into sin again.

Towards the latter end of the summer, 1767, my surviving cousin, Mr. William Miller, said to me one Sunday morning, " Will you go to hear Mr. Wesley, who is to preach at eight o'clock ? " I replied, " I will." Accordingly, we went, and waited till Mr. Wesley came. When he appeared, the first sight I had of him so much affected me, that I could not soon forget it. Soon after he stood up and preached from the following words :—" The wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein." Under this sermon I was more instructed than under all that I had heard before put together. In the evening he preached on " He healeth the broken in heart." Both of these sermons were of such service to me,

that I never more gave such a loose to sin as I had done before; although soon after I fell from my former steadfastness, and lived carelessly for near a year.

The means of this fall was as follows:—Wanting to send a letter to my father, and hearing that there was a young man at the inn who was going to Pembroke, I took it to him to save the postage. And as he had lived some time in London, and was a sprightly young man, the enemy suggested that I was some years younger than he, and at present as likely to live. I therefore thought, Why should not I enjoy the pleasures of life a little longer as well as others, especially as I have no desire to be wicked? Thus the subtle adversary reasoned with me, while my foolish heart first listened, and then yielded to the temptation. I have often since regretted this fall more than all the rest; because it had not only all the aggravations of the others, but blasted the first fruits of Mr. Wesley's labour, which made such a promising appearance on my heart and mind.

In August, 1768, Lady Huntingdon opened her school at Trevecka. Among the scholars there, was a Mr. Shipman, one of those expelled from Oxford the year before. Under the second sermon he preached in Brecon I was again convinced of my wretched condition, and resolved once more to turn to God. I was so deeply affected, that I thought all in the house must have felt the same impressions; and indeed many did. Glory be to God, I have been enabled to hold on my way ever since! The Sunday following I heard Mr. Howel Harris, when the word sunk into my heart. I then began to mourn for all my sins, and to seek the pardon of them

through the blood of Jesus. I would also gladly have joined the society; but as no one asked me, I was afraid to ask them, because I had no acquaintance with any of them, and because I thought I was not fit to be among them; being much afraid I should fall again, and bring a scandal upon them. Indeed, I was afraid they would not receive me, and seemed to dread a refusal worse than death.

About a month before Christmas I had a strong desire to receive the sacrament; yet I trembled at the thought, lest I should eat and drink my own damnation.

As I wanted a new Common Prayer-book, the bookseller persuaded me to buy one with a Companion to the Altar in it: I took his advice. When I went home I read it, and the Lord so blessed it to my soul, that all my scruples were removed. Accordingly, I resolved to go to the Lord's table on Christmas-day. When the time came, I was overwhelmed with dread, and went trembling to the altar; but when the minister gave me the blessed elements, God gave me the sweet drawings of His love. This did not abide long; but while it did, I thought I was in heaven! Surely I have reason to love the Church of England; and, blessed be God, I have done so ever since; for I felt then, (as I have done many times since,) that the Lord can and doth give His blessing to all who come to His table trusting in Him; though neither minister nor congregation are truly spiritual people.

That evening Mr. Cheek preached in the Methodist meeting, and desired any who chose it to stay at the meeting of the society. I gladly accepted of the invitation. In his exhortation he said, "If any desired to join the society, they might speak to some

one who knew them, and they should be admitted on trial." As I longed to be joined to them, I spoke to Mr. J., and was that night admitted. I was soon known by all the society; and some of them who were Calvinists took great pains to confirm me in their opinions: but I never could hold them altogether after I was convinced of sin, and had tasted in a small degree that the Lord had pity upon me; for I concluded that if He was willing to save wretched, sinful me, He could find no one more unworthy of His mercy among the whole human race.

One evening as I was alone in a bower in my uncle's garden, the enemy wanted to trouble my mind about those things. On this I fell on my knees, and begged of the Lord to teach me what was right on either side, if it was necessary for me to know them. Immediately I felt those words impressed on my mind, "Be determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." I cried out, "Lord, that is enough;" and resolved that I would not give way to any such thoughts till I had found the Lord in pardoning love. Upon this I found more earnestness in seeking Him than ever, and often mourned in bitterness of spirit because I did not mourn enough.

One morning while I was hearing the word, I felt power to believe that my sins were forgiven; but in a moment I was robbed of the blessing, by the enemy's suggesting that I had not repented enough. Some time after, I rose (as usual) to read and pray; and as I was reading a sermon upon faith, the Lord again gave me power, not only to believe, but also to hold fast my confidence. O, what a heaven did then spring up in my soul! I felt that the kingdom of heaven is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the

Holy Ghost! My heart was filled with joy, and peace, and grateful love: I walked all that day in the light of God's countenance. At night that dear servant of God, Mr. Watkins, of Llanusk, met the class; and O, how did his soul rejoice, when he heard that another was born into his Father's kingdom! He conceived a great affection for me that night, which he retained to the day of his death. My life was then truly comfortable. I could bless God every hour that ever I was born.

In the latter end of that summer I was appointed a class-leader. I entered upon this office with great reluctance; yea, with fear and trembling: however, the Lord supported me. The society increased that winter, so that in the spring I was obliged to take charge of another class. Some time after there were prayer-meetings established, and the preachers desired me to take the conducting of them upon me.

After they had been continued some time, I found it impressed upon my mind to give a few words of exhortation; and we went on happily for some time. But in August, 1770, Lady Huntingdon proposed to Mr. B. that the chapel in Brecon should be reserved for the use of her scholars, and whomsoever her ladyship should appoint; by which means Mr. Wesley's preachers were to be entirely excluded. But Mr. B. refused to comply, and soon after settled the chapel on the Methodists. I then dreaded what soon followed; namely, a separation of the society. As I was strongly attached to some of the scholars, it was like death to me to be separated from them; but I saw the unreasonableness of their proceedings. Lady Huntingdon had not given a shilling towards building the chapel, but Mr. Wesley had subscribed eighty pounds. I considered farther

that the society had been raised and kept up for near twenty years by means of Mr. Wesley and his preachers. Her ladyship said to several of us who waited upon her on the occasion, that she had no objection to Mr. Wesley; that she loved and honoured him; that her sole reason for separating was a desire to see what good her students would do separate from everybody else. Soon after her ladyship sent one of the students to town to preach in another place, at the same time our preacher was in the chapel. This distressed me much. I had the cause of God much at heart, and I feared such proceedings would injure it greatly; but God overruled all for good.

I never till now felt what may be called the fiery darts of the devil. He tempted me several times in one night to drown myself; and I had many other horrid temptations. But God provided me a friend in the time of adversity. Robert Phillips lived in the same house with me, and was witness to all my distresses. He was an exceedingly pious, as well as sensible, young man. When he saw me in deep distress, and undetermined which side to take, he laboured with all his might to compose my mind; which he happily accomplished; and when that was done, my attachment to Mr. Wesley, the justice of his cause, and my being now almost clear in his sentiments, soon determined me to stay where God had called me: on this I soon got the better of my uneasiness, and my former tranquillity revived.

I have since thought that the Lord permitted me to feel more upon this occasion than anyone else, to prepare me for what He intended concerning me.

A few months after, Robert Phillips urged me very fervently to begin to preach. I was much

affected when he spoke to me on that head. But when he asked me if I ever felt any inclination or disposition of mind towards it, I could not say but I had ; yet I could not say assuredly that it was from God : therefore, I always suppressed the thoughts. Soon after, one of the preachers was taken ill, and I went to Llanusk to desire Mr. Watkins to go and preach for him at Llangene. But as Mr. Watkins was ill also, he desired me to go. But I told him I durst not, till I was sure I was called of God.

The next week, brother Phillips collected together some of the most sensible and pious of our society, and one Watkin Watkins, (a gracious young man,) of Lady Huntingdon's society. We continued in prayer till near midnight ; and before we parted, all present with one consent declared, they believed God had called me to preach the Gospel, and urged me at last to make a trial. I was still very timorous, and must own I had a dislike to being a Methodist preacher, knowing that he has a larger portion of reproach than others. Yet this was not the principal reason of my reluctance ; but the very great importance of the work. But as I durst not be inattentive to the persuasion of my friends, and to what I felt in my own heart, when most happy, I consented to make a trial, and accordingly went to Llangene. And though I was not so happy as usual in my own mind, (being much agitated,) yet the power of the Lord was present. He gave me utterance, and many were comforted greatly. But this did not satisfy me. For as there were none awakened nor justified that I knew of, I resolved as I went home, that I would go no more. Indeed, I was very glad that the trial was over, and that I had now, as I thought, full proof that I was not called, and that I should no more be



troubled with such thoughts. But God forgave me this rash resolution, and my reluctance to take up the cross. When I went home, all my friends were still of the same opinion, that I should go on. Mr. Watkins went to the same place the following Sunday, and gave out that I should be there on that day week. I went with great reluctance; but just before the time of preaching I poured out my soul before the Lord in prayer, entreating Him to give me a token of His will in blessing my endeavours, if He approved of my proceedings. I prayed in faith, and the Lord heard me. My own soul was overwhelmed with Divine love, and many were filled with the presence of the Lord, and some with godly sorrow. From that time I have been kept from having many doubts respecting my call to preach the Gospel.

The following spring and summer I exercised my small talents principally in the neighbourhood where I began. And at the end of the year both Mr. Dempster and Mr. Rodda advised me to give myself up entirely to the work at the ensuing Conference; but as I much doubted my abilities for a travelling preacher, and thought I should be useful in that neighbourhood as a local preacher, I declined it. After Conference I had work enough; for there was one preacher less than the year before appointed for the Circuit, and I was called to supply the vacant Sundays at Brecon and the Hay.

Mr. Fletcher's "First Check" came out about this time. I read it with attention and prayer, and all that followed as they came out: and I bless God I ever saw them; for I have had no doubt of the truth ever since.

Several of the preachers every year advised me to

travel; but as I was useful where I was, I could not think of leaving that town till God had raised one up to supply my place as a local preacher, especially as I knew the Circuit was not able to support another travelling preacher.

The summer following, I lost a good friend, Mr. Howel Harris. He had often given me good advice. I went to see him about nine days before he died. I shall never forget his parting words to me and another young preacher: "My dear young men," said he, "wherever you are, take care to maintain that the only reason why all are not saved is, that which the Saviour hath given, 'They will not come unto Me that they may have life.'" The next winter I lost another great friend, the dearest to me of any man living, Mr. Watkins, of Llanusk. He had been a zealous preacher for twenty years, and enjoyed the love of God uninterruptedly for four-and-twenty years. He had taken great pains with me from our first acquaintance. When I took my last farewell of him, he said, "O my dear John," (the tears flowing from his eyes,) "the enemy strives to have my life; but it is hid with Christ in God." He died soon after in full triumph of faith. I may safely say that he did not leave his fellow behind him, in all that country, for deep piety, Christian experience, zeal for God, and true benevolence. He feared not the face of any man, if he met him in defence of the cause of God; but I have seen him submit like a lamb when his own reputation has been shamefully traduced, though I knew he was as innocent as a new-born child of the things laid to his charge. Thus lived and thus died my dear friend; and as such I mourned for him. O that I may be found at his feet in the day of the Lord!

About this time Mr. Church began to preach. I then thought, God was making my way clear to go into the work. But a thought struck me, (and followed me for many days,) that God had raised many preachers in England and America; but few, if any, in the West Indies. It was therefore strongly impressed on my mind that I ought to offer myself to go thither. Accordingly, I mentioned it to Mr. J. Brittel, who said he would go with me, if I was approved of. I then wrote to Mr. Wesley upon the subject; but he, not approving of it, advised me to go to Kingswood till Conference, and told me he would then appoint me a Circuit. But my friends were loth to part with me; and, at that time, I was dubious of my call to travel in England; supposing there were plenty of travelling preachers there; and therefore I declined taking his advice respecting Kingswood, and waited to see if God would reveal His mind to me more fully between that and the Conference. And though I laid it before Him with great earnestness, I was rather in suspense till a few days before the Conference sat; when I came to a determination to write to him, and to desire him to decide it for me. Soon after the Conference I received a letter from him, informing me that he had appointed me to the Glamorganshire Circuit. I then prepared for my journey, and went off as soon as possible. At my first setting off the Lord gave me great encouragement; for the people were loving and kind, and Mr. Boon, my fellow-labourer, watched over me in tender love. He saw my weakness and defects, and studied my improvement in all things.

The next year I was appointed to the Pembroke-shire Circuit. Mr. Bradburn was exceedingly kind

to me; he took as much pains with me as if I had been his brother. That year we had some fruit of our labours, especially at Carmarthen; but we had many trials also. However, I can bless the time that I was appointed there, if it was only for the sake of being a year with Mr. Bradburn. Mr. Dixon was my other partner, whose steadiness and meekness were of great use to me.

The next year I was appointed for Glamorganshire again, to labour with plain, honest Mr. Ashman. We spent a happy year together. It is remarkable that the two years I was in that Circuit, there was very little good or harm done among us. The congregations, in several places, were tolerably large and lively; but yet few were convinced or converted.

At the next Conference I was sent to Londonderry, to labour with Mr. Watkinson. We had many trying circumstances to encounter here; but we lived and acted in perfect harmony, and had some fruit of our labours, which made our trials much easier. That year the Lord was pleased to carry on a great work at Coleraine, which has continued ever since. Two clergymen of the Established Church, Mr. B. and another, whose name I have forgotten, were favourable to the cause, and kind to us.

While I was in this Circuit, I received a circular letter respecting an African Mission. As soon as I read it, I felt a strong desire to offer myself to go; yet my nature shuddered at the thought of leaving father and mother, brothers and sisters, friends and country, but especially my dear brethren in Christ. I also dreaded the intense heat of the sun by day, and the damps of the night; which I had heard were in general fatal to an European constitution.

In this deep distress I prayed to the Lord that He would give me direction and strength. The next morning I went to church, when one of the Psalms for the day was the one hundred and twenty-first. In reading it, I viewed it as an answer to my prayer. But when we came to the fifth verse, my soul was so overwhelmed with Divine love, that I could no longer doubt of the will of God concerning me. As we read on, I resolved to offer myself to go, on which all my fear and dread vanished away.

I think I should not do justice to this narrative, if I did not insert the fifth and following verses. "The Lord Himself is thy keeper: the Lord is thy defence upon thy right hand; so that the sun shall not burn thee by day, neither the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; yea, it is He that shall keep thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth for evermore." Having received this clear answer to my prayer, I hesitated no longer; but offered myself freely and fully, if approved of by my brethren in Conference. But they did not approve of the Mission itself, on account of the war: so the matter was for that time laid aside.

I have often thought since, that they were too cautious; and sometimes I have thought, that because they would not give me up at all hazards to the Lord, He has shown them what He can do in my native country; for I have had two violent fevers since, and by the last have been rendered incapable of doing much for near two years. I know it was tenderness in my dear brethren; but I have always been of opinion that we ought to have gone; and if the Lord ever restores me to tolerable health, and it is judged right to send out a Mission into

those dark regions, I hope I shall be as ready to go as ever.

While the matter was in suspense, I wrote to Mr. L., of Pembroke, to acquaint my parents of my intention. In a short time he wrote me word, that when he told them, they said, they had given me up to the Lord when I first set out to travel, and were determined never to recall me. This gave me great comfort; for, as they are tender, loving parents, it would have added much to my affliction, if they had opposed my going.

The next year I was appointed for Ireland, to labour in the Lisburn Circuit. This was a year of great trouble; but I was enabled to bear it all for the sake of God and His cause.

In the month of February the ship "Lydia" (a letter of marque, of above three hundred tons burden, belonging to Messrs. Robinson and Chorley, of Liverpool) was wrecked near Sheepland, in the isle of Cale, when all the crew (except one man) perished. She was outward-bound, and richly laden with various kinds of English and Irish manufactures. We had several societies in that neighbourhood; and many of our people went with the rest of the country people to plunder the wreck, and others of them bought or received presents of the stolen goods.

Before I came to that end of the Circuit I had to preach at a new place (Kirkeel) in the mountains of Mourn. At the time appointed there was so large a congregation assembled, that the little house would not hold one quarter of them. And as they had never seen a Methodist preacher before, they urged me to come out. But I objected, as it blew and rained very hard, and was also rather late in the night. To this they replied, that I should be as

well off as they, and better ; for they would make me a tent on the lee-side of the house, with boat-sails. As I found they began to be clamorous, I put my cloak on, and went out immediately ; for I saw they would be long in making the tent. Accordingly, I preached near an hour, while the people were as attentive as if they had been in a church. That night a work began which flourished for some time, and was in a good state when brother B. left the Circuit the year following. How it has been since I do not know.

But preaching out of doors in the night, and in such weather, gave me a dreadful cold. In this state I went among our poor fallen people in the isle of Cale, and found that every society had, more or less, been partakers of the accursed thing, except that dear people in Shangford. I therefore found I had nothing to do but to get rid of them, and at the same time to preach repentance and restitution unto them. My preaching had the desired effect with many, who came with tears in their eyes, and proposed restitution as far as they were able. Nevertheless, I thought it my duty to put them out of the society for a season, as their crime was so glaring, and of so heinous a nature. I considered that repentance was all that we could require for the offence against God, and restitution was all we could insist on for the offence they had committed against their neighbour ; but they could make no satisfaction for the scandal they had brought on the people of God, but by being publicly put out of the society, and kept out for a season. I accordingly, with an almost broken heart, read out sixty-three in Downpatrick on the Sunday evening ; adding, that those who would make restitution should be restored at a proper time ;



but those who would not, should be recorded in the general steward's book, with an account both of their crime and obstinacy.

This severity (as some called it) had in a great degree its desired effect. It entirely rolled away the reproach that would otherwise have stuck to the Methodists, and prevented our usefulness in those parts. On our removing the preaching from the place where the depredations were committed, a creditable farmer took us in, where much larger congregations assembled, and where a good society was raised before the year was out.

All this time the cold I had taken at Kirkeel increased daily, for want of time to take something to remove it. I was also almost heart-broken for the great evil that was done; which both together threw me into a violent fever. But herein I experienced much of the tender dealings of God. I was seized with the fever in Lisburn, and in one of the tenderest families in Ireland, where the accommodations were every way suitable to my condition. Here I lay in a very dangerous way for three days. But my physician (Dr. Bell) was very attentive. The fourth day I was out of danger, and recovered so fast, that I preached in a fortnight from the beginning of my fever, and was on my Circuit in three weeks.

This fever was a great blessing to my soul; for I felt the truth of those words, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." It was also good for my body, as it removed a consumptive habit which I had laboured under for fifteen years, inasmuch as I had as good health for above two years after, as ever I had in all my days.

After this, I and my fellow-labourer went on comfortably the remaining part of the year, while the

work of God prospered more than it had done before, in our time, in the isle of Cale. For many of the offenders were deeply humbled before God for the scandal they had brought upon His cause, repented heartily for the breach of His holy law, made all the restitution they could to the people they had injured, and therefore were admitted into the society again.

What was very remarkable, there were some who never belonged to us (only as hearers) that desired to make restitution with our people, being induced thereto by our preaching.

Some time after I wrote to Messrs. Robinson and Chorley the whole state of the case, and desired to know with whom I was to deposit what was restored. They wrote me a very polite and Christian letter, and directed me where to send the effects, and empowered me to allow the people salvage for their trouble; (but this I never did, because they had stolen the goods;) and congratulated me upon being connected with a people so open to conviction. I also heard that several gentlemen in the neighbourhood remarked, that the Methodist preachers had proved themselves honest men; and said, if the ministers of every persuasion had acted as they did, most of the goods might have been saved. Thus we see our God can defeat Satan's boldest designs, by causing all to end in His glory.

I was next appointed to Belfast, where I continued till March, when Mr. Wesley was kind enough to remove me at my own request to Londonderry again. I shall ever feel gratitude for his great tenderness to me in that removal, and to Mr. Rutherford for changing with me so readily. But I stayed three weeks at Coleraine before I went to Derry, and found a blessed increase of the work of God; for it

was at that time the best-disciplined and most lively society I ever saw before or since. And no wonder ; for it had been blessed with two good men, (Messrs. Rutherford and Moore,) and indeed most of the society had drunk into their spirit.

From thence I removed to Derry, and was received by my old friends with much love. I continued there till about a month before Conference, when Mr. Wesley was pleased to direct me to go to Dublin with all speed, to supply Mr. Boardman's place, who was gone to England. Soon after I came, my uncle Miller, (with whom I had lived thirteen years,) being very ill, desired much to see me, and procured a letter to be sent to Mr. Wesley, requesting that he would send for me, that he might see me before he died. Mr. Wesley was so kind as to comply with his request, and accordingly wrote to me, to be in Bristol the Saturday before Conference.

At that Conference I was appointed for Brecon. When I came thither I found my uncle recovering, who rejoiced to see me, as did also all the family and my religious friends ; yea, all my acquaintances in the town seemed glad to see me. But I was a good deal grieved all this year, to see so little fruit of our labours ; though, blessed be God, there was some.

In February I met with a great deliverance as I was going into Radnorshire. As I passed over the mountains beyond Pains-Castle, it snowed very hard. When the snow ceased, a thick mist came on, and soon after a very dark night. In these circumstances I expected nothing but to perish before the morning ; as the snow had filled up all the roads, and as I was afraid the fog would bewilder me. Going on, I soon lost my road, and found myself among a number of turf-pits. In this situation I

looked up to God for direction. Presently I recollected that the wind was west when I came up the hill; and knowing that my course was near north, and that there was a valley lying east and west, about two miles to the northward, I resolved to shape my course by keeping the wind upon my left cheek. Being rather afraid lest the wind should change, I looked up and left that to God. As I could not see twice the length of my horse, I was in great danger of falling into the turf-pits. Nevertheless I went on, trusting in God, and was kept happy in my soul. Having travelled a long time in the dark, I at last saw a star through the fog, and judged that the valley was near; and in a short time I found it to be the case, to my very great comfort, and, through the mercy of God, I entered it, and so got safe to B. Griffith's about half past seven o'clock.

The June following, Mr. R——, of Caresoos, related a remarkable instance of the power of religion. About a week before that, there had been in that neighbourhood the most tremendous storm of thunder and lightning, hail and rain, that ever had been seen there by the oldest man living. Indeed I never before saw such horrid devastations in roads, hedges, fields, gardens, and houses, and hope never shall again till the general dissolution of all things. But, as it was then so well described in all the public papers, and repeated in most of the parish-churches, in a brief for the poor sufferers, it must be well known to all people; and therefore I need not mention the particulars here. But the circumstance I am going to relate was this: Six or seven people belonging to Mr. Rowland's society were assembled together for prayer, in a house by the side of a river which falls into the Severn at Caresoos. All of a

sudden the river rose and overflowed all the banks. The house was built of timber, and was soon swept away, with all the people who were in it, except one young man who got upon the top of the chimney, which was of brick. The neighbours, seeing him in this situation, came to the water-side; but, having no boat in all the neighbourhood, they could yield him no relief. Though there was nothing before him but certain death, for the waters kept rising very fast, yet he continued singing and shouting in Welsh, with all his might, *Glogoniant! Glogoniant!* that is, "Glory," till a large piece of timber (a wreck of a bridge that was carried off) struck against the building, and dashed it to pieces, on which he fell into the water, and followed his companions into a blessed eternity. But before he fell he told the people on the shore, that all his companions went off praising God in like manner.

At our next Conference, in 1781, I was appointed for Lynn Circuit. This year I was exceedingly happy in my partner, Mr. Button, and promised myself a comfortable time; but the Lord knew what was best for me. For on October 10th I was seized with a violent bilious fever. It was eighteen days before I was deemed out of danger; during which time I was thrice thought to be dead by all who saw me, and was actually once deprived of all sensation for six minutes; but God restored me, and gave me much patience and a great sense of His love.

Sending for the minister of the parish, Mr. Crofts, he came; on which my soul was much refreshed. When I had an interval of ease, so that I could bear to sit up, I sent for him again to administer the Lord's supper to me. Many of our friends attended, and we all felt the Divine presence in that

blessed ordinance. After this he came often to see me ; and when I was able to sit up, he would stay some time with me, and often pressed me to send to the parsonage-house for anything I desired. But though I never sent for anything, as I needed nothing, he often sent what he thought was proper for me. May God reward him for his kindness to one who was near four hundred miles from his father's house !

Here also I saw the wonderful goodness of God, in afflicting me in the most convenient place in all the Circuit. For Mr. and Mrs. Parker spared no pains or expense in providing everything convenient for me ; and Mr. and Mrs. Stead, at whose house I lay, devoted all their time unto me, and cheerfully ran the risk of catching the disorder, by attending me all the day-time.

When I began to get better, and was able to converse, I spoke often to my doctor of the things of eternity. He was an elderly man, and of good report in the town. I had a particular love for him, on account of the great attendance he gave me, visiting me five times a day, though he was much employed among other patients. About the time he had done with me he was taken ill himself, and soon after died. His nurse, one of those who were with me, sent me word that she hoped my conversation and prayers were not lost upon him.

As soon as I was able I went to Lynn ; but, having begun preaching too soon, I got a severe return of my disorder. I stayed there till Christmas, and found I could not recover in that bad air. I then wrote to Mr. Wesley, representing my situation in full, and the state of the Circuit, which had suffered greatly on account of having but one travelling

preacher. He kindly invited me to come to London without delay, if I was able; adding, "Here you can have the best medical advice in the kingdom." He then sent me money enough to bear my expenses, which was very seasonable, as I was run very low by a long doctor's bill, &c., which the Circuit was not able to discharge.

When I was coming away, a gentleman of Lynn was so kind as to take me five-and-twenty miles in his own chaise, the day before the coach came in, to try if I could bear the journey, as well as to take off some of the fatigues of the first day. Accordingly, through the help of God, I arrived in London with very little difficulty. When I came to the Foundery, Mr. Wesley and all the family received me with the greatest tenderness. I indeed found it a house of mercy to me in my weak state. For Mr. and Mrs. Bradford, who had the management of the house, took the greatest care of me. In a few days, Mr. Wesley sent me to Dr. L[etsome], who presently finding out my case, I recovered wonderfully under his hands. But about the latter end of February, the winter set in very severe, and gave me a violent relapse into the fever. I began to recover again in about three weeks, but a cough and feverish habit remained all the spring and summer.

In June, Mr. Wesley sent Dr. C[oke] to Dublin, and some of our friends thought that such a journey would do me good. Accordingly we set off, and on our landing in Ireland I was rather better; and continued tolerably well all the time I was there, which was about three weeks. For two or three days after I returned to London, I could not discern whether the journey had done me good or harm, as I had been very sick at sea, and came from Liverpool



to London without being in bed. But when the fatigue was over, it was visible to all who saw me, that it had done me good ; yet I was not so well as to be able to take a Circuit. When I mentioned this to Mr. Wesley, he judged it best for me to continue in London, that I might be under his eye, as well as near Dr. L[etsome].

Soon after Conference we began to meet the classes, which I found very fatiguing to my body. As soon as we had done this, we entered on a more laborious task ; namely, visiting those in their own houses who had not met their classes the last quarter. Before we had quite gone through this business, I was again seized with a fever, and continued very ill for near three weeks ; at the end of which I began to recover again. Before this I was above three months not able to preach ; but now the Lord so strengthened me that I could preach two sermons on the Sabbath, and one in the middle of the week, without the least hurt.

When I was at the worst, many of my friends, who lived a little way in the country, kindly invited me to visit them for the benefit of the air. I gladly accepted of their offers, and lived among them as much as I possibly could, varying the scene as I felt myself affected. This was the principal means of my recovery this time ; for the doctors advised me to take but little medicine.

At present I am astonished at the infinite goodness of God, in raising me up so many friends in my time of sickness. I receive it as a pledge of His love, and am enabled to believe that He will always provide for me. If I should be advised to remove to my native air, for the confirmation of my health, I have several open doors. Two gentlemen in particular, in

two different counties, have lately given me pressing invitations to come and live with them as long as I find it needful. But as I am now able to do a little, I am inclined to stay in the Circuit, if I can ; but if it is judged better for me to remove into my native air, I am resigned.

During my last confinement I was wonderfully supported ; for though the enemy tempted me sore at times, yet he gained no advantage over me. I was often tempted to murmur at my being obliged to drag on so heavily ; but I was enabled to be resigned to the will of God, knowing that I was His prisoner.

I often thought with great comfort on what Mr. Charles Wesley said about a year ago : “ Young and healthy Christians are generally called to glorify God by being active in doing His will ; but old and sick Christians in suffering it.” Lord, let me but glorify Thee, and choose Thou the manner ! only give me strength, and I will bless Thy name.

I bless my kind Redeemer that He has given me full confidence that He will not remove me hence till I am made ready. And I am firmly persuaded that it is the privilege of all that are born of God, to be saved from all sin, and to live in the full enjoyment of the love of God ; and that this salvation is necessary in order to our entering into the kingdom of heaven. I hope He will soon accomplish this great work in me, that I may be wholly His, in heart and in life, in time and to all eternity.

JOHN PRICKARD.

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MR. ATMORE says, speaking of Mr. Prickard, “ It was not long before he was made a partaker of this

hope, in the completest sense; and he soon finished his course with inexpressible joy."

It does not appear that any account of Mr. Prickard's death was ever published. In the Minutes of the Conference of 1784, in answer to the usual question, "Who have died this year?" the following character is given of him:—"John Prickard, a man thoroughly devoted to God, and an eminent pattern of holiness."

THE LIFE  
OF  
MR. JONATHAN MASKEW.

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BY JOHN GAULTER.

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I HAVE always considered it as a reflection on our Connexion that so many of the first preachers among the Methodists have passed without notice into the grave. Almost every circumstance of their history is important, as the fathers and founders of many of our societies. If this is neglected much longer, it will be almost impossible to preserve anything interesting of their experience, labours, and usefulness; as their friends, and children in the Gospel, from the lapse of time, are fast moving off the stage of life. We know their names, a few places of action, and we see the fruits of their labours; but we want more positive information relative to men, to whom, under God, we are so much indebted.

We see men every day registering their infamy, and perpetuating their crimes, by publishing them; and the press groaning under a weight of biography that, it is to be wished, for the happiness of the world, will only furnish materials for the fire, or habitations for the worms. And shall we not be as

zealous to be useful, as they are to disseminate the most noxious principles, in bringing from the unworthy obscurity in which they have been too long concealed, those excellent men who counted not their lives dear, that they might preach the Gospel, and spread the knowledge of vital religion? With this view I have collected this imperfect account of a man but little known in the world, or among the Methodists. The sources of my information were his children and neighbours, and the society to which he belonged. In his lifetime he certainly stood high in their opinion for singular seriousness and invariable steadfastness, who, if not flattered by popular admiration as a preacher, was justly esteemed for undiminished zeal and continued love, in the service of his Master and the church of God, until the frost of time had honoured with hoar his head, and nature sunk into the grave.

JONATHAN MASKEW, the subject of this short memoir, was born near Bingley, in Yorkshire, in the year 1713. It would appear, from his confined education, that his parents were far from being opulent; and it is probable, it was with difficulty they supported the expense of his learning, in the little he acquired, which was not much more than reading and writing; and whatever were his future acquisitions in letters and knowledge, it is to be ascribed more to his own industry, than to original instruction. At school he was expert in every childish folly, and among the boys an example and leader in mischief; but this was not, as he declared, without a conscience tortured with fear and alarm, and haunted with the dread of the Divine displeasure. From his earliest recollection he was conscious of

the workings of the Spirit of God on his mind, and in the midst of the follies of his youth, the struggle against his natural corruptions, though feeble, and generally ineffectual, was continued. There are few who have experienced the power of godliness who cannot readily recur to the first impressions of Divine influence. These generally occur in early life, when the passions, following the impulse of temptation, captivated by the allurements of pleasure, meet a check from the convictions of conscience and the illuminations of grace. It is then that the struggle begins. Our fallen spirits rise in enmity to the Divine law, and attempt to cast off all subjection to the authority of God. We refuse to hearken to the voice of the charmer, stopping the ear, and making the heart\* hard as adamant; persisting in sin, we fly the accusing conscience, "and dread no witness like upbraiding thought." Mr. Maskew, at the time the work of grace commenced in his mind, which led to his conversion, was without those aids of instruction with which thousands are now blessed. The serious preaching of the Gospel, at this period, was much on the decline. In many parts of the nation it was so universally exploded and dreaded as enthusiastical, that a species of morality little superior to that taught in the schools of Greece and Rome was the fashionable Christianity of the day.

The Puritans, those venerable promoters and examples of holiness in the pulpit and in private life, who, by an arbitrary stretch of authority, had been silenced, left but few such successors in the Church. Party rage, the example of a licentious prince,† a corrupt court, and the wit of a burlesque poet,‡ had

\* See Zech. vii. 11, 12.    † Charles II.    ‡ Butler.

nearly with them banished all evangelical principles and awakening preaching.

Dark as was that day, the light of genuine truth was not totally extinguished: a few obscure clergymen, and the successors of the ejected ministers, unawed by the fear of man, and untainted by prevailing error, still maintained the simplicity of the Gospel, and preached the doctrines of justification by faith, and the necessity of regeneration. Although it was Mr. Maskew's misfortune to be unacquainted with those men, or the truths which they preached, yet he was not without many helps, which, in countries not professing the Christian religion, are neither found nor expected: he could read the word of truth, and hear a liturgy in which are the doctrines of Christ. But it was not to these, however useful and necessary, that he principally owed his convictions, but to the Spirit of God, that Spirit which was to convince of sin. It has been already noticed, that his mind felt the pangs of early awakenings, and the struggle between nature and grace. Though this was the case, through the force of temptation, and the influence of corrupt example, he fell into those sins which made him insensible of danger, and brought on a guilty stupor of conscience. But the conscience of man is ever accessible to God: He

“ Can rouse her from her formidable sleep,  
And bid her dart her raging talons deep.”

That merciful Being, who wills not the final misery of His creatures, followed him with the calls of His grace; for, on the commission of sin, his imagination was frequently terrified by the just expectation of everlasting misery. Sleep forsook his eyes, and life itself became a burden. In fields, and unfre-



quented places, he sowed the bitter tears of his sorrow, and groaned out the remorse of his soul. Having no instructor, at every point his prospects were dark. He had formed the most erroneous conceptions of the Deity; for he considered His justice as almost necessarily engaged to inflict future misery on his soul; and such was the state of his knowledge, that gloomy and dishonourable ideas of God had nearly deprived him of his reason. The only suspension he found was in the intervals in which he was forming resolutions of reform and amendment, hoping to satisfy for the past by the future rectitude of his behaviour. But like those remedies which, applied to the natural diseases of men, failing in effect, only inflame and aggravate the disorder; so on the failure of his scheme of relief, his mind was wrought to the highest pitch of despondence and desperation. It is not possible, from the character of God, to suppose that a soul under the impression of guilt, and struggling (although in the dark) to know, love, and serve Him, to give up sin, and become the servant of righteousness, however for a time he might be ignorant of the truth, could finally plunge into misery. We may say of such, with a little variety in the application, what St. Ambrose, one of the fathers of the fourth century, said to Monica, the celebrated mother of Augustine, on her pressing him to exert his influence and abilities for the conversion of her son. "Go thy way," said he, "compose thyself; for it is not possible that a son of such tears should perish." These observations receive confirmation by his experience; for, according to the best information which I have been able to procure, he did not continue long in this deplorable wretchedness, and lamentable igno-

rance of the way of salvation. By degrees the truth dawned upon his mind, and at last he fully saw the Divine method of salvation. It should be remembered, that this was not effected by any known human means, nor by the people with whom he was afterwards connected, for their persons and doctrines were at that time unknown to him, but by the good providence of God, and the influence of the Holy Spirit. Light begets light; the Scriptures opened their heavenly doctrine and holy consolations on his mind; he saw that God had laid help upon One who is mighty; that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to them who believe; that there is a kingdom of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost formed in the heart of the Christian; that the Gospel warrants the enjoyment of all its mercies to them who repent, and believe in Jesus. Hope sprung up in his soul. He cried, "Save, Lord, or I perish!" As he cried, the rays of approaching mercy began to illuminate his soul; his gross misconception of the Divine character fled; he rested his guilty spirit by faith in the atonement of Christ, and found that invitation of the Redeemer, "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out," did not mock his confidence, or disappoint his hope. In a moment the burden of his sin was removed: heavenly joy, and a peace which passeth understanding, entered and possessed his soul. It was like the dew of Hermon, and the dew that descendeth on the mountains of Zion, where the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore. Thus the gloomy and poignant distress of his soul ended in the knowledge of the Divine favour, and the clear discovery and experience, that true believers "have redemption through the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins." For if

sinner are justified, it is because Christ has died, who entering into the holy place, His blood speaketh better things than the blood of Abel. Then He turneth aside the demands of justice for violated laws, and answereth by the plea of His sacrifice; for He died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. So that the Christian may sing,—

“Hail, mercy! triumphant goodness, hail!  
Hail, O prevailing!—ever, O prevail!  
At thine entreaty, justice leaves to frown,  
And wrath appeasing lays the thunder down.”

The happiness and comfort he enjoyed in his “first love” continued for several years. He walked in the light, and had fellowship with the Father and the Son. In the fulness of his heart he often exclaimed, “O Lord, I will praise Thee! though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortest me.” His nights and days glided sweetly along, and the difficulties of his human course only added incentives to his diligence, and warmth to his piety. Fervent in spirit, he rejoiced in hope. Serving the Lord, by being instant in prayer, he could rejoice with them who rejoiced, and weep with them who wept.

There is nothing, in my apprehension, in the character of God, or in His relation to us, that makes it necessary that there should be such an inequality in the experience of Christians. That there is, will not be doubted by any who are acquainted with the Christian world. When we are first visited by Him who commands the light to shine in our souls, we have no forebodings of dark and cloudy days. Nor is it evident, from the Scriptures, that believers must of necessity lose their confidence, fall into doubts, suffice

an eclipse of their comforts, and be brought again to feel the misery of an absent God. The promises look back to a certain and continued enjoyment of rich supplies of the Spirit of Christ ; to a correspondency with heaven, through which the peace and love of God keep and regulate the heart. And it would certainly be an unjustifiable imputation of the want of omnipotence in the Saviour, to suppose Him incapable of keeping His children, as well as a daring insult to His perfections, who is the Lord and Head of the church. Certainly, trials and temptations, various in their kinds, to disturb the quiet of the mind, to divert it from the only current of its happiness, and the pursuit of holiness, will frequently occur. The rains will descend, the floods rise, the winds blow and beat upon the house ; but the Christian, founded upon his Lord, although there are fightings within, and distractions without, by looking unto Jesus, may go on from grace to grace, until he appears before the Lord in Zion. If, therefore, after our knowledge of salvation, we should again be brought into darkness, it is to be imputed, not to the Redeemer, whose willingness is equal to His ability to save us every moment, but to our misapplication of those graces which His blood hath purchased, and His Spirit imparts.

After Mr. Maskew had lived for several years in the enjoyment of his confidence, and an increase of union with the Lord, he fell into a train of temptations, which, not meeting with the resistance of experience, and gathering strength from continuance, deprived him of his peace and happiness. It does not appear, in the first instance, what causes administered to his loss ; but the recollection of this period of his life never failed to revive the ideas of departed

moments of misery and sorrow. His mind again became the scene of bitter distress. Carried away by a torrent of impious temptations, his heart indulged the most horrid and blasphemous thoughts of God. Distracted with doubt, he called in question His being, insulted His perfections, and disputed His government of the world. It was suggested to his mind, that the Bible was a work of human policy; that artful and designing men had imposed it on an ignorant and credulous world, to gratify their ambition, or to supply the lust of gain. When the force of these temptations had subsided, they were followed by others, if not of the same degree in impiety in their nature, yet they were no less fatal and destructive: for as temptations unresisted and unsubdued prepare the mind for future stings of conscience; so the enemy of his soul, to shut out every source of hope, and to prevent his return to God, harassed him to the verge of despair. He concluded that he had sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost, that God had given him up to the hardness of his heart, that his day of grace was over, that he should become the victim of that justice he had injured, and be passed unnoticed by that mercy he had slighted.

How long he continued in this state is not known; but it is probable, that not long after the attack of the last-noticed suggestion, the hope of returning mercy once more dawned on his soul. With better information than at first, with clearer conceptions of the nature of religion, and of our Advocate with the Father, he began to call upon God. The Lord heard him. He found his lost consolation, which, from that moment, neither the trials of life, nor the powers of darkness, could shake; and witnessed its triumphs

in the last struggle of nature. He cried out, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits, who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercy." That heart which had successively been raised to Divine delights, and distracted with unbelief, was again the habitation of peace and happiness; and with renewed pleasure contemplated, with its accustomed confidence, that day when she should

"Walk with God,  
High in salvation and the climes of bliss."

It is difficult to determine with any degree of certainty when he became acquainted with the Methodists. We find him early connected with that pious and distinguished minister, Mr. Grimshaw, of Haworth. For many years he was a part of his family, and shared his friendship, and partook of his bounty. It is said he superintended his glebe, and united in himself the servant and companion. At least, it is probable he was in some way or other connected with his affairs, as to this day, in Rossendale, he is best known by the name of Mr. Grimshaw's man.

As soon as Mr. Maskew heard of the Methodists, and had read their publications, he wanted not motives to unite himself to a people who preached the truths he experienced, and the doctrines he believed; and, accordingly, was one of the first members of our society in that part of Yorkshire where he lived. As his heart was now filled with love to God, and zeal for His cause, it will not appear extraordinary, if we find him exhorting his neighbours and friends to "flee from the wrath to come." This was the case first in the neighbourhood where he

resided, and, in consequence of the spread of Methodism, in various parts of Yorkshire and Lancashire. The unction of his word, and the warmth of his address, are well remembered, when in the vigour of life, fearless of danger, the inclemency of seasons, and in the midst of violent and barbarous persecutors, he preached the Gospel of Christ. And there are several, now living ornaments of their profession, who were the early fruits of his ministry, and the seals of his apostleship.

And here I hope I shall be indulged for a moment in a review of the first instruments which God raised up for the establishment and spread of Methodism. Most of them were unlettered, unphilosophic men ; men who had not enriched their minds with knowledge drawn from the instruction of the learned, or the schools of science. Their preaching, simple and artless, not adorned by the flowers of eloquence, or the artificial powers of persuasion, captivated the attention of thousands. Numbers who had been a disgrace to society, as ignorant as they were profligate, were awakened to a serious concern for their future welfare, and, abandoning their sins, sought and found the salvation of that Gospel which they heard and believed. Converted to God themselves, they gave efficacy to the savour of their discourses by the active piety of their lives ; and their glowing zeal for the salvation of souls was only equalled by their just conceptions of the doctrines of Christ. When I look round on the fruits of their labours ; the number of our societies ; the places of worship, which rival, for neatness and accommodation, the most admired structures of the Establishment or Dissenters ; the number and abilities of the preachers ; a Connexion embracing the opposite



shores of the Atlantic, and finding an establishment in the woods of America, and among the poor enslaved Africans of the British islands, and still spreading in different parts of the world; I cannot but think that man an infidel to the real work of God, and a stranger to the effects of grace, who will not confess that God was with them.

The opposition which the first preachers met with in their attempt to spread the knowledge of Divine truth is as well known as it is disgraceful to their opposers; and it would be well if, in times professedly more liberal and enlightened, the present preachers had not to complain of the abuse of power, and the spirit of intolerance. The liberty of religious opinions has been the boast and glory of our nation; but the history of Methodism affords examples which will lessen its claims, if not to laws which establish its freedom, to those entrusted with their execution. The injury which many of them have suffered, and the insults they have endured, not only from the mob, but from men officially engaged to protect and defend them, are a disgrace to our national character; and if the half was told, it would startle the humanity, and raise the resentment, of those whose principles are averse from persecution.

Mr. Maskew had not long been engaged in his Master's work, before he was marked out as an object of popular vengeance. In one of the towns where he had frequently attended, he was attacked by a rude and ignorant rabble, no doubt either instigated or countenanced by those who were called their betters. They seized him, stripped him naked, rolled him in the dirt, and carried their injustice to a length which had nearly deprived him of life. But this did not interrupt his labours. For his zeal,

collecting fresh vigour from opposition, and neglecting the timid counsels of fear, carried him above the dread of persecutors; and this notorious violation of law and humanity failed in preventing his going to that place where he thought his duty and conscience called him; till at last his enemies, ashamed of their conduct, or deserted by their supporters, left him to his delusions, that is, to call sinners to repentance, and preach, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

Another instance of providential deliverance occurred one Sabbath evening after he had done preaching at a small village near Leeds. He had just sat down with a gentleman, one of his friends. While they were conversing, the house was surrounded by a daring gang of desperadoes. Determined to rid the country of these canting heretics, they came armed with sticks, stones, and a pistol; and, it is probable, had not God interposed, that night had ended his labour and his life. The gentleman, who was dressed in the canonicals of a black coat and a white wig, first attracted the attention of the mob. As soon as they saw him through the window, they cried out, "Here he is! here is the parson! we will soon do for him!" But they had neither calculated the merit of the action, nor the possibility of a disappointment. The evening, which had been remarkably fine, in a few minutes was overcast, and the thick clouds announced an approaching storm. A torrent of rain succeeded, with tremendous claps of thunder, and vivid flashes of lightning. The gentleman, as soon as the storm came on, opened one of the windows, and addressed them on the impiety of their conduct. But whatever might have been the eloquence of the speaker, the thunder and the rain

had more persuasion ; for they found no inclination to endure the severity of the evening, but sought a shelter under the neighbouring hedges. This was the moment of escape. Mr. Maskew and his friend seized the opportunity, and, preferring the violence of thunder and rain to the stones, clubs, and mercy of those whom the courtesy of our country calls "our fellow-Christians," attempted to reach a place of security. The notice of their escape was soon communicated to the mob, who pursued them with shouts, fired the pistol, and strained every nerve to overtake them, but in vain. From the complexion of the men, their threats and number, it is more than probable, that, had not the good governance of God interposed, they would have glutted their revenge with blood ; and these men, engaged in the service of their Lord, that night would have become the victims of an ignorant and brutal persecution.

How long it was after his beginning to exercise his talents as a public preacher, that he was called upon by Mr. John Wesley to enlarge the circuit of his usefulness, I am not informed ; but we find him employed as an itinerant preacher in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in the year 1752. His plain and pathetic preaching was here generally acceptable, and useful to many. Before he left Yorkshire he had formed a strong and lasting friendship with the Rev. Mr. Milner, of Chipping, in Lancashire, a respectable clergyman of the Established Church. One of his letters to Mr. Maskew, directed to Newcastle, is preserved ; and, as it illustrates the high estimation in which he was held at that time in the Connexion, its introduction will not be considered as useless.

"CHIPPING, *November 2d, 1752.*

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"WHOM I love in the truth. Your kind and loving epistle I received the last Lord's day, and was not a little glad to find that you remember me in your prayers before the throne of grace. I doubt not but the work of God prospers in your hand, and rejoice to hear that as your day so your strength is; that the more you labour the more you prosper both in soul and body. Verily, we may say we serve a good Master.

"You have probably heard of my being called before the bishop, for the high offence of letting Mr. Wesley preach in my pulpit. I came off triumphantly, and my adversaries had just cause to be ashamed. The bishop heard me with so much mildness and candour, and I told him so plainly and fully the happy efficacy and success of the preaching, even of the lay preachers, that I have great hopes he will not be an enemy, but a friend. Do you, my brother, remember him in your prayers; that he may do the work of an evangelist; that he may so discharge the office of a bishop as to receive an immortal crown of glory, when the chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls shall appear. Amen! That great and tremendous day will make awful discoveries. Then, I am persuaded, you, and such as you, will lift up your heads with joy, when many that now make a scoff of your labour would be glad to hide themselves, though it were under rocks and mountains. Indeed, my dear brother, I do heartily rejoice in your good success, and wish the pleasure of the Lord may daily prosper in your hands yet more and more. Well may the society flourish under your care, through the blessing of God upon your labours; if you knew

what Mr. Wesley said of you, that ‘ten such would carry the world before them.’ I go on but heavily, yet hope, through grace, that I shall be found faithful. The last week I was with Mr. Grimshaw, who is full of love and life. We were both at Bolton with Mr. Whitefield, who endeavoured to be a healer of the breach. He spoke much to prevent the spreading of a party spirit, and I hope not without effect. We must allow him the praise of a popular preacher; and all glory be ascribed to God, who has given such gifts to men for the edification of His church! When the good providence of God brings you this way again, there are many that will be glad to see you. We have some that have found the precious pearl, and I hope many that are seeking earnestly for it. My last letter from my brother Nathanael makes me full of hope for him. He has often spoken of the serious weighty words you spoke to him. O, remember him and me in your prayers! who am your affectionate, but unworthy brother,

“J. MILNER.”

Mr. Maskew continued in Newcastle until the spring of 1753, when he was called by Mr. Wesley to assist Mr. John Haughton, (then one of the travelling preachers, but afterwards a minister of the Established Church in Ireland,) in the Manchester Circuit. This order is the only scrap which has escaped the general wreck of Mr. Wesley’s letters to him; and, as it is additional evidence of his usefulness and general character, its insertion will not require an apology.

“LONDON, *February 22d*, 1753.

“MY DEAR BROTHER,

“I CANNOT blame you at all for writing to me,

before you determined anything. I believe your staying so long in the Newcastle Circuit has been for good, both for you and for others ; and you are still wanted there. But you are wanted more elsewhere. I do not mean you should go to Mr. Grimshaw's Circuit, (although you might stay a fortnight there, not more,) but to Manchester. I promised you should set out to help brother Haughton, as soon as brother Hopper could go to Newcastle. So that you are sadly beyond your time ; the blame of which is probably (as usual) laid upon me. Therefore, the sooner you are at Manchester the better. Peace be with your spirit.

“I am your affectionate brother,  
“J. WESLEY.”

It is a circumstance well known to those who are acquainted with the early history of Methodism, that some of the first preachers either became ministers of the Establishment, pastors of Dissenting congregations, or settled among their brethren, where they officiated as occasion offered. Those who resumed their original employments saw nothing discreditable to Christianity, or degrading to the Christian ministry, in the humble callings of life, but rather an approach to the original simplicity of that Gospel which owes its influence in the world, and its successful spread to the ends of the earth, to apostles who could draw the net, or handle the axe.

Among many others, one of the principal causes which influenced this conduct was the great extent of the Circuits ; for, as the preachers married, there was an unavoidable separation from their families. A day or two, in six or eight weeks, and sometimes much longer, was the only opportunity which they had

of performing the duties, or sharing the comforts, of domestic life. Such a separation was disagreeable and painful in the extreme; and if it will not be considered as a sufficient excuse, it is at least, if not convincing, a plausible extenuation of their conduct. Mr. Grimshaw, whose laborious endeavours for the good of souls have been the subject of just admiration and merited praise, had introduced the preaching into a dark and ignorant part of Lancashire, called Dean-Head. The manner of its introduction was as singular as the event was prosperous. He had observed a respectable man of that part of the country frequently attend in his congregation. This person was only known to him by name. One day, without invitation, after he had done preaching, he said, "I shall preach at Mr. Clegg's on Tuesday next." He went, preached; Mr. Clegg and his wife were awakened, and soon after converted to God; a little society was formed, and the preaching in that neighbourhood continues to this day. The preachers in succession cultivated the soil which was broken up by the powerful preaching of Mr. Grimshaw, and for many years it had a regular attendance as a branch of the Haworth Circuit. Mr. Clegg's death soon followed his receiving the Gospel, but not without his witnessing its efficacy in the struggle of expiring life.

Some years after the death of Mr. Clegg, Mr. Maskew was appointed for the Haworth Circuit. In the course of travelling, an intimacy took place between him and Mrs. Clegg, which, ripening into affection, after consulting their mutual friends, ended in their union. After some time the concerns of his family obliged him to settle in a farm at Dean-Head, from which he never removed, until under the



weight of years he sunk into the grave. His secession from the laborious toils of an itinerant life was not the signal for indifferency or inaction. The love of ease, or of indolence, was none of his vices. His farm and family became a centre, from which his usefulness was extended in every direction ; and, although from his comparatively local situation, the benefits of his ministry were confined, his zeal, as fervent as it was holy, like the sacred fire of the temple, continued to burn. The farm which he occupied was surrounded by huge and barren mountains, whose haggard sides,

“Desert and bare, unsightly, unadorn’d,”

appeared like the hasty work of the Creator, without the final polish of His hand. Over these dreary mountains, always covered with bogs, and frequently with snow, through roads at that time almost impassable, he continued to carry the Gospel of his Master into Yorkshire, Rossendale, and Rochdale. He formed for himself a Circuit, which he attended for several years, with the promptitude and regularity of his itinerant life ; and God continued to bless his soul and his labours. His piety was not less conspicuous : his house had its altar, and its God. Every day this apostolic man, with primitive simplicity, collected his family for the purpose of prayer and praise ; and, according to the testimony of one of his children, for thirty years this had seldom been omitted. And, I may add, if truth is to be collected from the united voice of a people, to whom his weaknesses and virtues were equally known, for piety, temper, and seriousness, and every ornamental excellency of the Christian character, it is not exaggeration to say, equalled he may have been, but not often excelled. Highly

as he was esteemed by the little circle of his friends, as his preaching, though useful, and often blessed by success, never rose to distinguished notice after he settled, this excellent man was almost unknown in many parts of the Connexion. But value and obscurity are not contradictions. Men of the first talents and unquestionable piety, for the want of those occasions which give celebrity to worth, have been but little known.

“ Full many a gem of purest ray serene  
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear ;  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.”

From the first dawn of the Reformation, the Protestant world has been much divided. The questions of “ high predestination,” irresistible grace, freedom of the human will, general redemption, with their collateral subjects, have been debated with as little regard to personal reputation, as the spirit of Christianity. It had been well if the rancour of party animosity had stopped here. It did not. Instances could be multiplied, but one is more than sufficient. Forgetting the tolerant principles of that religion which is full of all goodness, the Calvinistical faction at the Synod of Dort, influenced by the prevailing politics of the country, and aided by the secular arm, drove the Arminians from their churches and friends, and devoted them to wander as the outcasts of society, in the neighbouring states, where, among strangers, they found a protection which they sought for in vain in their own country. Unhappily for the peace of many serious individuals and families, this dispute still continues. But, either more acquainted with the spirit of the Gospel, or happily deprived of the

power to coerce opinion, the contest is not now disgraced by the powerful arguments of confiscated property, banishment, and the gloomy horrors of a prison. If force and violence are no more, this controversy has not been purged from the envenomed bitterness of polemic warfare. In its late revival, men whose character for piety and learning should have restrained them from (to use no harsher term) the illiberality of personal abuse, which can never convince, but must always offend, have indulged it to an excess which knows no comparison, but in the practice of wretches who are a disgrace to the world : but “unthought of frailties cheat us in the wise ;” and our expectations from the professors of a religion which, in its nature, is as gentle as it is pure, alas ! for the credit of the Christian cause, are seldom raised without the certainty of a disappointment. Dishonourable as was the spirit with which the controversy was conducted in its revival in 1770, there were several exceptions. The most distinguished was the Vicar of Madeley ; and the name of Fletcher is still pronounced by thousands with the mixed emotions of gratitude and reverence. This heavenly-minded man knew nothing of that spirit which makes “envy and malice its nourishment ;” but while he combines the clearness of conception with the strength of argument, his pages are not poisoned with biting insinuations and direct abuse. To that species of argument which is no less than restrained persecution, he was a total stranger. Intrenched in truth, with the address of a skilful disputant, at every point he resisted error ; and as he did not confine himself to the defensive, on many occasions he boldly attacks his opponents ; but while he exposes their mistakes, he justly discriminates between

opinion and character, and, in language at once animated and mellifluous, combats their sentiments, which he considers as injurious to the cause of Christ, and "masked reprobation," but praises their virtues. He lived to triumph, and retired with honour from the field, carrying to his beloved retirement, not the reproaches, but the esteem, of the vanquished. This dispute found its way among the first preachers, at an early period of the present revival of religion. Mr. John Wesley believed, what thousands of us still believe, that God is loving to every man, and that He wills the salvation, and seeks the final happiness, of His reasonable creatures ; that His calls are not delusive, or subject to the control of a secret purpose, but as His Gospel is to be preached to every man, His mercy is as extensive as His invitation ; that His promises are for His people, and not to men who live in the practice of manifest impiety ; and that the foundation of our perseverance is not, that we have once known God, but our continuance in that knowledge, glorifying Him with our bodies and spirits, which are His. There were others who embraced an opposite opinion, believing the doctrine of the decrees, &c. Dispute ended in division. Separate congregations and connexions were successively formed, many of which continue to this day. Mr. Maskew had united himself to Mr. Wesley, and with him believed that the doctrine of general redemption was most congenial with the Scriptures, and every just conception of the nature of God.

But after he had settled, he began to dispute the truth of the doctrines which he had received, and what he had heartily believed became the subject of doubt. As his sermons were soon tinctured with

doctrines varying from those which he was accustomed to maintain, they attracted the notice of some serious persons of that persuasion. As their place of worship was not many miles from Dean-Head, and being in want of a minister, he was invited to take the charge of their congregation. This he accepted, and continued some time their pastor. But as his mind was still in suspense, he cried to God for direction. He searched the Scriptures, not to press them into the service of a creed already formed, but that his views might be determinate on the disputable subjects which employed his inquiry. One night, sleepless upon his bed, and weighing the arguments for and against those opinions to which he had found so strong an inclination, a passage of the Scriptures occurred to his mind with such light and conviction, that from that hour he reverted to his original principles, which he continued to maintain to the last moment of his life. The consequence was, an immediate change in his labours. He gave up his charge, and returned to his first friends.

From this time he continued to exercise his talents among the Methodists. But the shades of the evening at last came on. He began to descend the vale of years. In the enjoyment of a vigorous habit of body, he had been enabled to meet the sharpest blasts, in a country naturally wild and exposed, without feeling the inconveniences of more delicate constitutions. But years constrained him to relax in the prosecution of the only engagement in which his soul delighted,—the preaching of Jesus to a sinful world. By degrees he was forced to give up his attendance at several places, where he had been accustomed to preach for many years; until at last this man of God, for such he was, exhorted the

people in his own house ; and, when he could stand no longer, sat, and, while tears ran down his venerable cheeks, called them to partake the mercy, and wash their guilty spirits in the blood, of the Son of God. It may be said, almost without variation,

“ Of no distemper, of no blast he died,  
But fell like autumn fruit that mellow’d long ;  
Even wonder’d at. because he dropp’d no sooner.  
Fate seem’d to wind him up for seventy years,  
Yet freely ran he on ten winters more ;  
Till, like a clock worn out with eating time,  
The wheels of weary life at last stood still.”

For a few of the last months of Mr. Maskew’s life, enfeebled by age, and worn-out in his Master’s service, he was constrained to confine himself to his own house. The members of his class, and other serious persons from the neighbouring societies, were his constant visiters. But it was not idle curiosity, or a conformity to the common civilities of others, which brought them together. They came to receive instruction from a father in the Lord, and to see a saint dying, covered with the glorious prospects of immortality, and a confidence unshaken as the promise of God. To them he opened the treasures of his experience, and his union with God. At one time he would say, “ The day of our death is better than the day of our birth ; for it is not life, but death, that joins the dying believer to Christ. I am in a strait between two, having a desire to be with Him.” Again he would say, “ Death is a cure for all our diseases ; at once the aching head and declining body is at rest. The saint, like Noah’s dove, can rest nowhere but in the ark ; and with their Lord the weary are at rest :” and would add, “ For me to

live is Christ, and to die is gain; the Christian gets more from death than life." At another time he cried out, "It is a blessing for Christ to be with us in life, but it is the top of blessings for us to be with Christ in heaven; for there we shall have an incorruptible crown, that shall never fade nor perish; and not only a crown, but a kingdom. But we must put off the rags of mortality before we can put on the robes of glory." And again: "The fear of death is gone: it is only a short dark road that leads us to the marriage-supper of the Lamb." At another time he said, encouraging his Christian friends, "What joy there is in heaven, when a redeemed spirit enters those holy mansions! Angels, archangels, Christ, and the Christian brethren who have escaped before, welcome them to the happy shore, no more to be tempted, no more to part; but

'Far from a world of grief and sin,  
With God eternally shut in,'"

These sacred subjects employed his conversation. He delighted to indulge in contemplating his own and the believer's triumphs. He would say, "O death, it will be the funeral of our sorrows. Did not David fall asleep? Did not Stephen sleep in the arms of Jesus? And is not Christ the first-fruits of them who sleep? And them who are asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him:" and added, "So far as any man trembles at death, he wants love; for love casts out all its fears; and it is no credit to our heavenly Father, that we are unwilling or afraid to go home."

He frequently exhorted those who were about him to keep up what he called "their private trade with heaven." For, said he, "A Christian can as well



live without food, see without eyes, or walk without feet, as live to God without secret prayer." At another time he said, "I have been in the service of a good Master for fifty years, and now I am more in love with His service than ever; and I see no need of altering any of the doctrines which I first preached, when the Lord called me into His vineyard." His love to the person and work of Christ was often expressed by the warmth with which he repeated His name: "O that name, Jesus! how sweet it is!" This was frequently his pulpit language, and is remembered, not for its singularity, but for the animated fervour which an old disciple felt, when he pronounced the name of the Friend of Sinners. If this is enthusiasm, it is so nearly allied to gratitude, that it is devoutly to be wished that every professor of his religion was an enthusiast.

Towards the close of his pious warfare, his soul was filled with more than ordinary comfort. He would cry out, "I desire to be dissolved, that I may be with Christ:" and, "Now, Lord, let thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." When his speech had nearly failed, a friend called in to see him: he would have conversed, he attempted, but it was in vain. But signs, looks, and broken accents explained the happiness of his soul. The last time, I believe, he ever spoke, he raised one of his hands, and, with a smiling countenance, said, "Look, James, look!" His son looked, and inquired; but he spoke no more. Surely there is some truth in that general opinion, that saints, in their approach to glory, have on earth a glimpse of heaven:—

“The chamber where the good man meets his fate  
Is privileged beyond the common walk  
Of virtuous life, quite in the verge of heaven!”

A little after this he changed for death; and on August 3d, 1793, in the eighty-second year of his age, he departed this life, leaving behind him a family afflicted with his loss, and the character of a useful and pious man.

Mr. Maskew was a Christian in whom there was little to censure, but much to commend. From a transient acquaintance, his seriousness would have been considered as approaching to gloom. But it is not from a glance, but a closer inspection of characters, that we form just estimates of their faults or excellencies. Although he did not rank cheerfulness among the crimes of men, yet such was his extraordinary and uniform gravity, that numbers have attested, what may appear a singular fact, that they never observed him to laugh. Yet, his countenance was not the index of a mind ill at ease, or overwhelmed with distress, but an interesting picture of solemnity and delight. He spoke, and acted, as in the presence of God; and perhaps was one of the most serious men that ever appeared in the Methodist societies.

His conversation was as spiritual as his seriousness was remarkable. He possessed the happy address of improving the intercourse of friends to the wisest of purposes. God and His Christ, His manifold wisdom in the works of nature, His love to fallen man, the events of time, the aspect of seasons, uncommon occurrences, and the mortality of this life, were topics which he delighted to introduce; not with that cold and barren indifferency which is the mere effect of habit, but with a warmth

of affection, which at the same time interested attention, and promoted piety; so that his friends retired from his company delighted with his views of religion, and his zeal for God.

His tenderness of the character of others is as worthy of praise as it is of imitation. Although not insensible, that such are the imperfections of our nature, that in most men there is "something to blame, and something to commend;" yet he discovered nothing of that discreditable inclination which delights the invidious; who, more disposed to censure the defects than to praise the virtues of men, are at home, and only in their native element, when they can gratify the desire of scandal and defamation. Nothing was more averse from the principles and practice of Mr. Maskew than scandal. He considered such a character as unchristian and detestable, equally unacquainted with the spirit and letter of the religion of Jesus. Perhaps he carried this principle to an excess; for he was more inclined to soften than to expose, and generally extenuated what he could not directly defend. If this is an extreme, it is certainly the best, and is at least an approach to the spirit of Him who said to His disciples, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." But execrable is that man, whose luxury is envy and detraction, never glutted with them; the worthy and deserving are not sacred, and against such the most irreproachable character is no defence. Happy would it be, if the most marked indignation should collect on those pests of society; exposing, as examples of general contempt, the wretched disturbers of the quiet, and the destroyers of the peace, of innocence and worth.

In his life he supported an admirable propriety of

conduct. He was the same in his family as in the pulpit ; and the market and church witnessed a behaviour which reflected no discredit on the Christian cause. He was not under the influence of the smiles or fear of man ; for, as he never affected popularity, he had nothing to expect from flattery, nor to fear from contempt. He saw before him the example of his Master, which he endeavoured to transcribe into his life ; and if he was emulous of honours and riches, it was to be like Him, and to enjoy His grace. Whatever were his abilities at the commencement of his public ministry, in the latter part of his life, although loved and esteemed by those who, from their acquaintance with the doctrines of Christ, can distinguish between excellence and ornament, he seldom attracted general notice. But popular opinion of pulpit abilities is more frequently mistaken than correct. Comparative neglect, and real merit, are more generally united than admiration and genius. But his design was not to blow the trumpet of fame, but to preach the Gospel with simplicity, and to profit the souls of the people. This he did, in his plain, lively, and useful manner, which, applied by the Divine Spirit, was effectual to the conversion of sinners, and to the comfort of the Lord's people. His piety, commencing in early life, did not degenerate with the lapse of years ; nor was the seriousness of youth the precursor of aged impiety. The opinion, as false as it is old, that "a young saint will be an old devil," received no confirmation from his experience. On the contrary, as he advanced in years, he grew in grace, and the latter part of his religious course was more glorious than the former. That men are wicked in age who have been pious in youth, is as opposite to fact as to the Scriptures. The reverse

is the case. And so far from becoming vicious, they who have served the Lord in the vigour and strength of their days are, in general, the most uniform and honourable members of the Christian church.

An end like his was necessarily happy. His soul had long been accustomed to look on death without dread, and into eternity with pleasure. He delighted in contemplating the moment when his imprisoned spirit, freed from the shackles of flesh and sense, should enter his Father's kingdom. As he approached the completion of his wishes, his soul felt all the dawning transports of the ethereal visions, and Jesus, his hope and his salvation, were to him altogether lovely, as the world receded and eternity drew near. Just before the silver cords were loosed, and the golden bowl was broken, and the wheel stopped at the cistern, the placid smile of conscious victory illuminated his departed conflicts, and he passed into eternity, covered with the prospects of a blessed immortality.

It is no small honour to the cause in which we are engaged, that most of our brethren have met death, not only with unshaken fortitude, but with the most lively prospects of the fruition of heaven, and of seeing their Redeemer face to face. Nor can it be otherwise, when we consider His faithfulness who "loves them who love Him," and His attention who sees the fall of a sparrow, and numbers the hairs of our heads: for

"He looks; unnumber'd worlds before Him lie,  
And nature lives collected in His eye;"

and precious in His sight are the life and death of all His saints.

JOHN GAULTER.

ROCHDALE, *May 11th*, 1798.

THE LIFE  
OF  
MR. MATTHIAS JOYCE.

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WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

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I WAS born in Dublin, February 17th, 1754, of honest, industrious parents. My mother, who was a serious woman, was born in London, and professed herself a member of the Church of England. But my father, being a member of the Church of Rome, got me baptized in that Church, and instructed me himself, as far as he was capable, in the principles thereof.

When I was a little more than two years old, my sister, going one night on an errand with me in her arms, let me fall into a deep window, where there was a great quantity of broken glass and other rubbish. Close to the bottom of the window ran a rapid stream, which descended from the mountains of Wicklow, and emptied itself into the Liffy. The night being dark, and I not making the least noise, she thought I was carried down the stream and lost. However, she brought a candle, and found me lying across a stick that was in the window; which prevented my falling into the stream.

When I was about eight years old, a horse kicked me so violently on my thigh, that I fell to the ground, and yet I received no material harm. And about the same time I fell from a high wall, but was not much hurt.

When ten or eleven years old, I was thrown from a horse on full gallop, but received no harm. When I was about thirteen, coming one day from a review in the Phoenix-Park, the road was thronged with horses and carriages. A man in a chaise called me from the other side of the road to speak to him. While I stood talking with him, a horse on full gallop darted against me with his shoulder, knocked me down in an instant, went over me, and left me sprawling on the ground ; but, through the interposition of Providence, I was only stunned a little.

About the same time I was thrown down by two horses in a carriage, and was very much hurt ; while I was down, one of the horses trod upon me ; but the driver stopping in a moment, I had time to creep out of the way.

When I was about seven years old, my mother struck me gently on my hand for some fault I had committed ; on which I called upon God to d—n her. I was soon seized with conviction for this ; nor did it entirely wear away for several years. While it lasted I was frequently so terrified, that I could not see how I could be saved ; and sometimes I concluded I was born on purpose to be damned. But as I had heard among the Papists, that a child must be seven years old before sin can be charged upon him, I often calculated how old I was when I cursed my mother ; and if I could bring my age under seven, then I felt some ease.

When I was about ten years old, one of my com-



panions and I made an agreement to swear no more ; and, blessed be God, since that time swearing was not my besetting sin.

When I was about thirteen, I was taken from school, and my father and mother being mostly abroad, I was suffered to range wherever I pleased. Accordingly, I spent most of my time with those who neither feared God, nor regarded man.

In June, 1768, my father sent me to Mr. —, upon trial, to learn the art of printing. Though, by this means I was removed from my old companions, I still retained my love of sin, and, if possible, ran into greater excess of riot.

As I increased in years, my pride and passion increased also ; an instance of which is as follows. One evening my master's son wanted me to do something for him, which I refused ; upon which he went and told his father, who, coming into the shop, ordered me to do it directly. I told him plainly I would not. On this he seized an oak stick, and laid it on me until he broke it ; but so great was my pride, that I verily believe I would not have submitted had I been sure of falling dead at his feet !

As I was very strong for my size, I was made to do the drudgery about the shop, such as carrying bundles of books to the inns, &c. My master's son, one time thinking to have some sport by raising my spirit, called me "Porter, porter !" I could not bear this. My pride beginning to swell, I desired him to let me alone ; but he would not. I then snatched a large pair of shears, and threw them at him ; but, though he was not more than two yards from me, Providence so guided them, that, instead of darting into his belly, they only went into his coat, and hung there.

In September, 1771, I resolved to run away from my master, and enter on board a man-of-war. About the beginning of December, one of the men complained of me to my master for idleness, for which he gave me a gentle slap on the check. My pride then got the better of my judgment, and I determined he should strike me no more. Accordingly, that evening I fled from the house, with a full resolution never to return. I wandered about the city for some days, waiting for a fellow-servant who was to go with me.

Having spent the last Sabbath in taking leave of my friends, I got drunk. Then I returned to the place of rendezvous, where my companion and I quarrelled; and because I could not get my revenge gratified, I drew out a knife to kill myself. But several persons being in the room, got about me, threw me on a bed, and wrested the knife out of my hand.

The next day, as we intended to set sail for Liverpool, my father and sister came to see me set off. My poor father wept bitterly, and said, "Now I am left alone. I have no one to be of any comfort to me now. I shall never see thee again." He was at this time above seventy years of age; but neither his age, infirmities, nor tears, could prevail on me to stay. So I kissed him, and bade him farewell.

When I was on the great deep, it was so exceeding pleasant, that I thought if I had a fortune, I would even then go to sea. After a passage of two days we arrived safe at Liverpool. We had not been long there, before my comrade wanted me to return; but I said I would not. That night we stayed at Liverpool, and the next day crossed the ferry, and went forward to Chester. But it being exceedingly dirty,

travelling was very fatiguing ; so that I had not gone many miles before I began to be very weary ; then, with tears in my eyes, I reflected on my folly, and wished to be at my master's again.

After a disagreeable journey of four days, we arrived at Birmingham. By this time our money was spent, which was doubtless a singular Providence ; for if I had had money sufficient, I should have gone straight to London, and entered on board a man-of-war. At Birmingham I had a brother-in-law, of the same business with myself, who soon got me into work : but my comrade could not get any ; so he was obliged to sell his coat to bear his charges to London. When we parted, we both wept much ; but I never saw or heard of him from that time to this.

About the latter end of February, 1772, there came a countryman of mine from London to work where I was. I told him what I had done. He reproved me very sharply for it, saying I could never show my face in Ireland ; for if I did, I must serve that time over again. What he said rested upon my mind, and made me resolve to return the first opportunity, and serve my lawful master.

Accordingly, one Monday morning, this man and I set off together for Ireland. He had fivepence, and I had threepence. We made the best of our way to Wolverhampton, where we got a shilling from Mr. Smart, the master printer. From thence we pursued our journey to Alberton. It was quite dark before we got there. We had a crooked dirty road, and could not tell where we were, nor see each other at a small distance ; yet we urged our way till we entered the town. Here we got a lodging among a parcel of gipsies, and after some conversation

we went to bed, and in the morning pursued our journey.

The hardships I endured in this journey far exceeded all I met with before. We were brought so low, that my companion went to a farmhouse to beg; and, as he told me afterwards, sung a song for his dinner. But to beg I was ashamed; so I pursued my way, hungry and weary as I was, to Chester, and by this means lost my companion for two days.

When I came within half a mile of Chester, I sat down to rest myself. While I sat, my joints stiffened, and I became more sensible of pain. My feet also swelled, and my thighs were raw with walking. Here I sat, a poor forlorn wretch; without money, food, or any visible help. Nor did I know where to turn myself when I entered the city; but I had a hope it would be well with me when I got there. After some time I strove to rise; but it was with the greatest difficulty I got first on one knee, then on the other. However, by degrees, with excessive pain I got on my feet, and crept on. Just as I came to the river Dee, I saw a man with two pitchers of water, resting himself. I went to him, and asked him to let me drink. He said, if it was sack I should have it, and held the pitcher to my mouth. Having drunk freely, he asked me how far I came. I told him. He asked me if I had got any lodgings. I said, "No; neither have I any money to give for one." Then said he, "The Lord succour you! for you are come into a bad place; but come along with me." Accordingly, I went with him to his house, where he set before me hanged beef, bread, and potatoes; and made me eat until I could eat no more.

After dinner he went with me to look for work.

On showing me a master printer in the street, I went up to him, and asked if he wanted a hand. He looked at me, and seeing me very young, (being then about eighteen,) he said, "You are a runaway from your master; and therefore if I had room for ten men, I would not give you work." "O sir," said I, "will you give me something? for I am in very great distress." He answered, with a degree of sternness, "I will not give you one farthing." As soon as he said this, I turned from him, and was afraid to try anywhere else. On saying to my friend, "I will sell my waistcoat," he said, "Then come with me, and I will show you where you will get as much for it as in any part of the city." Accordingly, he brought me to a woman whose name was Reely, wife to Sergeant Reely, belonging to the Yorkshire Militia, who sold clothes for people, and got threepence in the shilling for selling them. When she saw me, she pitied my case; and when I stripped off my coat and waistcoat, she began to weep, and asked if I had nothing else to sell. I said, "No." Then she said she would sell it for as much as she could, and not charge me anything. She did so, and brought me three shillings for it. She also made me stay to supper, and washed my feet and handkerchief. She likewise cleaned my shoes, and sent her daughter to get me a lodging; and insisted on my having a bed to myself, let it cost what it would, and said she would pay for it herself. She also sent her daughter in the morning with my handkerchief and stockings, which she had washed, and gave me a loaf when I was going away, and charged me not to change my money until I got to Liverpool.

When I arrived at Liverpool, there was a vessel to sail the next day. Accordingly, I went on board,

with only tenpence of my three shillings left, which was only the third part of what would pay for my passage. With this I ventured on board, without any provisions, trusting to the generosity of a sailor on whom I had spent some of my money, and who promised, in lieu of that, to supply me with what food I wanted during the passage. Just as the vessel was about to sail, my companion, whom I had lost for two days, came on board ; who, having earned something, had just as much left, when joined to mine, as made up the price of one of us.

We set sail with a fair wind, while the sun shone bright upon us ; but we had not been long at sea, when a dreadful storm arose. The vessel was tossed about like a cork, and the sea dashed over it with dreadful violence ; while the waves, beating against her sides, made a noise like the report of a cannon.

Most in the hold were much terrified, and a few were endeavouring to pray ; while I, hardened wretch ! was highly diverted. At last a great wave dashed with such fury against the side of the ship, that I expected it would be beaten in. The fear of death now laid hold upon me, and I thought it was time for me also to pray. I therefore crept on my knees into a dark corner, and uttered a few heartless petitions. At length, after twenty-five hours' sail, we arrived safe in Pool-Beg. What money I had I gave to my companion, to make up the price of his passage, and sent him to my father to come and release me. The captain kept me prisoner all night, and threatened to take me back ; but my brother-in-law came down the next morning early, paid for my passage, and brought me safe on shore.

I was a month in Dublin before my master would take me back ; during which time I lived with my father. One day I met one of my old companions in the street, whom I wanted to come and dine with us. My father was not satisfied at this. Being highly offended, I refused to eat or drink with him, and so left him. He soon followed me, and reprimanded me for my conduct. I resented it immediately, by giving him impertinent answers ; upon which he grew very angry, and came forward to strike me. I stood up to oppose him ; being fully determined to give blow for blow ! I was at that time so inflamed with infernal fire, that I verily believe I should have done all in my power to have knocked him down if he had been permitted to come near me.

At last my master consented to take me home, upon condition that two persons would be bound for me in twenty pounds each. The bail being given, he received me again without an angry word.

After this I went on tolerably well for about a fortnight, till one of my fellow-apprentices gave me saucy language. As I could not bear it, I gave him a blow. He went immediately to my master, and complained, who sent up his son to know why I struck him. I sent him word that he was impudent, and that I would not take an affront from anybody. My master then came up with a large whip, and beat me most severely.

Not long after this, I took it into my head to run away a second time. Accordingly, I went twice to look for a vessel ; but the captain of a Bristol vessel that I thought to go with, refusing what I offered him for my passage, I gave up the thoughts of going abroad.



But though I was so far settled, I still went on in sin, and grew worse and worse every day. About this time I fell into the cursed practice of gaming, by means of a certain person of some note (now in eternity) who came to my master's. I remember, my fellow-apprentice and I had a great run of luck one night, when playing with my master's son. The next night he was afraid to play, and so went to bed; but I went to his chamber, and would not let him rest until he, most unwillingly, got out of bed to encounter me again. That night he stripped me of every farthing. I asked him to lend me a little to enable me to try my fortune again; but he would not. On this, I found as much of the spirit of the devil as ever I did in my life. If it had not been for preventing grace, I believe I should have murdered him.

To carry on this wretched employment, the aforementioned person contrived a ladder of ropes, to let himself and others out of a back-window in the night, in order to go to the gaming-table; and I was so deeply concerned in the scheme, as to drive in the hook, and go out first to try it. But the Lord brought about a discovery of the matter, which put an entire stop to it; yet not until my master's son lost about twenty-eight guineas, which were stolen out of his father's drawers by our instructor.

However, I continued to be led captive by drunkenness, till I threw myself into a pleurisy. Then I thought I should have died, and was in some measure convinced I was not fit to die. On this I resolved to reform my conduct if I recovered; but of turning to God as yet I had no notion.

As soon as I was raised up, and was able to go

abroad, I forgot my resolution, and as eagerly gave myself up to the service of sin as before; for, the second or third night after my recovery, I stayed out drinking till near twelve o'clock. My master hearing of it, said to one of the men next morning, "Why will you take that fellow out? He is but just recovered from a fit of sickness, into which he threw himself by drinking. I do not know what to do with him. Beating does him no good, and I am quite tired of it. I therefore give up all hope of his ever doing any good." And well he might, if there was no God; for it was beyond the power of man to turn the stream of my affections to that which is good. But God's thoughts were not like my master's: there was hope in Israel still concerning even me! For, notwithstanding my daring impiety, and repeated provocations, the Lord was waiting to be gracious.

In the month of September, 1773, and in the nineteenth year of my age, Mr. Wesley came to Dublin, when curiosity prevailed on me to go and hear him one Sabbath-day morning. As soon as I saw him, my heart clave to him; his hoary hairs and grave deportment commanded my respect, and gained my affections. What endeared him still more to me was, seeing him stoop to kiss a little child that stood on the stairs. However, though this prepared me for receiving the word of life, so great was my darkness, that I could not understand what he said; and therefore went away as ignorant as I came.

The next preacher I took notice of was Mr. Floyd. But I thought the first sermon I heard him preach was mere nonsense. However, I heard him again, and thought this sermon the best I had ever heard.

After this, I went every other Sabbath to the preaching; yet still I was led captive by the devil at his will: but though I repeatedly resisted the Holy Ghost, yet my longsuffering God did not cease striving with me. For, instead of giving me up, as He might justly have done, He deepened His work in my heart, and gave me to see, that if I remained a companion of fools, I must inevitably be destroyed. On this I resolved to quit them all; which resolution I was enabled to perform; and my fellow-apprentice and I agreed to watch over each other, and to reprove each other when we saw occasion.

About this time a providential circumstance helped to confirm my resolution of quitting the Church of Rome. I was one day in the shop while my master's son was turning over some old pamphlets that had lain by for years as useless papers; at last he picked up one which contained an account of the conversion of Anthony Egan, a Popish priest, in which he discovers a variety of tricks made use of by the priests to deceive the people. Annexed to this were twelve queries taken from the word of God, and proposed to the Church of Rome. When he looked at the title-page, he judged it would do for me; so, handing it to me, he said, "Matt, I will give thee this: it may be it will convert thee." I thankfully received it, and gave it a careful reading; the effects of which were,—1. A clearer discovery of the Church of Rome. 2. An indignation against those abominable tricks made use of by the priests. 3. A great contempt for a set of men who, to support a bad cause, were constrained to make use of such shifts, instead of sound argument. 4. A resolution to have no farther connexion with them.

From this time I was very constant in hearing the

Methodists, and walked more circumspectly than formerly. I was likewise more constant in private devotions, and had some small conviction of the necessity of a farther work. I also fled from my old companions wherever I met them, and felt an abhorrence to the works of darkness, and had a regard for the people of God.

Thus I went on till April, 1774, when, one Sabbath-day evening, as I was going to bed, I felt an unusual love, such as I cannot express, to the people called Methodists, and a strong desire to be one of the number; but I thought they would not admit me, as I was an apprentice. However, I said to my fellow-apprentice, "If I was out of my time, I would join myself to that people." He, being more acquainted with some of them, said they admitted apprentices. On hearing this I was glad, and resolved, without delay, to cast in my lot among them.

Accordingly, on Friday, the 6th of May, 1774, a day to be had in remembrance by me, I waited on Mr. Jaco, to receive a note of admittance. My fellow-apprentice (namely, Bennet Dugdale) went with me, more out of curiosity, than any real desire to become a member. Mr. Jaco brought us into a private apartment, and lovingly talked over the matter with us; then gave us our notes, saying, "The Lord write your names in the Lamb's book of life!"

A few months after we joined the society, all the men that were at my master's, together with their wives, joined the society; two of whom are gone into eternity, and I hope under the smiles of heaven. Most of the rest, I fear, have not adorned their Christian vocation. May that Divine Spirit who

subdued my stubborn heart convince them more deeply of the necessity of giving all diligence to make their calling and election sure!

I was two months in the society before I was thoroughly convinced of the depravity of my nature, and of the necessity of being born again. But one day as I was going up stairs to the printing-office, I fell on my knees to pray, (as I used frequently to do,) when the Lord appeared in terrible majesty, and Mount Sinai seemed to be in a flame. His voice thundered from the dreadful mount, and spoke in terror to my inmost soul, which made me tremble exceedingly. The Holy Ghost showed me the spirituality of the law in such a manner, that I saw and felt my inward parts were very wickedness. For some time I was quite dumb, and wondered that I was so great a monster! O, what heart can conceive the exquisite distress of my soul at this moment? I groaned, being burdened with a deep sense of the wrath of God! I saw myself just on the brink of hell! I thought I was undone for ever, and despaired of ever being saved! But what distressed me most of all was, my want of faith; for I thought I had not so much faith as the devil. In this condition I remained for some time before I was able to speak: at last I cried out in bitterness of soul, "O Lord, I went among this people to serve Thee better, but I fear I am worse than ever." Now Satan laid close and horrible siege to my soul, in order to destroy the good work which the Lord had begun. He injected the most dreadful blasphemies, even filling me with the most horrible and uncommon ideas of God; and urging me every moment, like Job's wife, to curse Him! Often have I concluded, and could scarcely persuade myself to the contrary, that I had yielded

to the temptation, and had really cursed God in my heart. O my God, Thou knowest the distress and anguish of my soul at this season ; and what strong cries I put up to Thee for deliverance. But, for wise ends, Thou wouldest not grant my request until I had suffered awhile. Yet, Thou didst support me in a wonderful manner ; in giving me victory over outward sin, in making my conscience more tender ; and in enabling me to form a determination, that if I perished, it should be in Thy service.

These dreadful suggestions, many of which I dare not name, not only haunted me through the common employments of the day, but also in my most secret retirements, and wherever else I went ; so that I have been constrained to entreat God to rid me of my life, and drive me out of the world. My flesh would creep upon my back, and a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation harassed me continually.

Surely I may as well forget my existence, as forget the misery and iron with which I was bound, and the variety of spiritual plagues that tormented me during my abode in the land of my captivity. And as I have found that telling my experience has been of use to some exercised in the same manner, I am not without hope that a particular but brief relation of the same may be of use to many more.

And, 1. I was almost continually tempted to doubt the being of a God. One argument the devil made use of to support his hellish doctrine was, that if there was a God, He would destroy me for my blasphemous thoughts. With this temptation I had many a sore struggle ; for I saw it was every way calculated to stifle my conviction, and kill my good desires. I therefore resisted it with all my might,

and cried vehemently to God against it. But Satan was resolved to dispute the point with me; for when I would retire in secret, he would pour in upon me like a flood, saying, "Whom art thou praying to? Surely there is no God to hear thee; or, if there is, He cannot hear thee through the thick clouds." On this I would be thrown into confusion, and immediately stop, thinking I was praying in vain.

2. Another of his temptations, which distressed me exceedingly, was concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, whether there was ever such a person in the world; and, if there was, whether John the Baptist and He did not make a league together to deceive the people. This suggestion wounded me to the quick. For so long as I was under the power of it, all hope of salvation was banished from me; because I saw there was no other way to be saved but by Him. But that text often lifted up my hands: "And, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him. And, lo, a voice from heaven said, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

3. But then Satan attacked me most furiously from another quarter, saying, "How canst thou tell whether the Bible is true or not? Thou knowest not but it is a cunningly-devised fable to keep the world in awe." This temptation brought exquisite distress to my soul. But, on the other hand, I was the more stirred up to cleave to the Bible, and examine it closely, that I might be able to silence the enemy. And therefore when he tempted me to doubt it, I would take it up and kiss it, then put it into my bosom and hug it, and say in a quick and positive manner, "I will believe it! I will believe it!"



I was helped a good deal by reading a passage in a certain book; the substance of which is as follows:—"They were either good men or bad men that wrote the Bible. If they were good men, they would not tell lies to deceive mankind, by saying they spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; and by saying, 'Thus saith the Lord,' if it was only their own invention. If they were bad men, they could not understand the deep things contained in the Bible; nor would they preach such self-denying doctrine, lest their own evil deeds should be made manifest."

4. At other times it was suggested to me that I had no soul; and that when I died I should be like the beasts that perish. This temptation afflicted me much, and cost me many a hard struggle; for, being extremely ignorant, I understood little or nothing about philosophical inquiries: yet I still made my request known unto God. At length I was led to consider the nature of my inward faculties; particularly my power of thinking. My thoughts, I found, were free and unconfined; that they could mount up to heaven, or dive into hell, in an instant; that they could with equal swiftness fly round the world, and as quick as lightning arrive at the spot I was in. I remember that one day, as I was walking with a friend, I was led to reason upon conscience when truly awakened; that it was neither visible nor substantial, like flesh and blood; and that therefore nothing material could wound or hurt it: that on this account it was different from the body, though dwelling in it: that the pain felt was different from that of the body when wounded; it being nothing else but condemnation for sin before God; whereas the body, being flesh and blood, felt

no such pain, because the pain of conscience is spiritual.

5. I was also tempted to doubt whether there would be a day of judgment, a resurrection, or whether there were any angels or spirits.

6. I was tempted to doubt, whether the Methodists were the people of God or not: for I thought they caused more disturbance in the world than any other people; and therefore I was nearly concluding they were all false prophets. Before the enemy was let loose upon me in the manner already mentioned, the preachers were dear to me; and as to Mr. Wesley, I thought I would be glad to be his servant, to clean his shoes, or do the meanest office for so precious a man; but now I seemed to feel no love at all to the preachers or him, and appeared to myself quite careless whether I was in their company or not. But the Lord did not suffer me to remain long under the power of this temptation; but banished it from me by the application of a text of Scripture, Acts v. 38, 39: "And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." Then I considered the Methodists as a people greatly persecuted by almost all persuasions, striving to extinguish the glorious light of the Gospel, which they were spreading far and near; but to no purpose. For instead of putting it out, their light shined brighter and brighter continually; and numbers were flocking to that light, that their deeds might be made manifest. Then it was clear to me that this counsel and work was not of men, but of God. I therefore thought I had much reason to praise the

Lord for honouring me with a place among His people.

Now while I was racked and torn by these horrid temptations, my convictions increased to such a degree, that I saw hell moved from beneath to meet me at my coming. And as all hope of mercy seemed to be cut off, and as I thought the God of love had given me up to be a prey to the devil, I said in my heart, "O, if I were even a devil, I should not be so much tormented in hell!" But though this horrid thought did not long abide with me, yet I so clearly saw that I was a hell-deserving sinner, that I acknowledged with all my heart, God would be just if He banished me from the glory of His presence; yet I found I would rather die than live any longer to sin against Him.

Time now was exceedingly precious to me; no moments were wilfully spent in mirth or trifling. I was in general as serious as death, and as solemn as the grave; and embraced each opportunity to call upon the name of the Lord. I also prayed out aloud when alone at my work, for a considerable time, and thought the time lost if anything occurred to make me stop praying. Thus tossed about as I was on the billows of temptation, and exquisitely distressed by heart-piercing convictions, I wandered about in the fields, and sometimes got into vaults and other secret places, to pour out my complaints before God; and when I have been going into dark places, fearful apprehensions would arise in my mind, lest the devil was in some hole or corner, waiting to carry me away. But, notwithstanding this, I went forward, kneeled down, and cried mightily to God, though my heart and my flesh trembled with fear.

At this time I sought after such books as explained

the nature of faith ; and when I met with one that treated on this subject, I searched it with as much eagerness as a man perishing through hunger would grasp at a morsel of bread.

Sometimes in the midst of my perplexity, not knowing where to find relief, I have been almost determined to go to the preacher, and ask him if he could tell me where or how I might find Jesus. But then I thought, As they are but men, it is not in their power to save my perishing soul. At other times I was almost persuaded to go and desire them to scratch my name out of their book ; for I thought I was the greatest hypocrite that ever existed.

But though I was thus led by the burning mountain which could not be touched, and through blackness and darkness and tempest, and often heard the sound of the trumpet, and the voice of words, in a spiritual sense ; yet I still remained a determined enemy to all the works of the devil. I may say, through the grace of God, I kept from every appearance of evil, as far as I knew ; and if, through ignorance, I committed anything that my conscience afterwards reproved me for, I did not rest until I confessed my fault, though I have been often laughed at for my scruples.

The following is an instance of my openness of heart, and tenderness of conscience, at this time. I had now a great aversion to newspapers, though before that I was exceeding fond of them. But one day as I entered the printing-office, the men called me to them. When I went, I saw they were reading a newspaper. On this they said, " You need not fear to read it ; " so I looked at it, and saw a spiritual play-bill, if I may so call it, concerning the day of judgment, that was stuck up at Richmond, on the

King's birth-day. When I read it, I liked it exceedingly ; and as I had not much to do, I printed a few of them, in order to give away, without asking my master's leave, not thinking there was any harm in so doing. But one night, at preaching, as I was giving one of them to a friend, he asked me if I had told my master. I said, "No." As soon as he asked me the question, my conscience smote me, and I was filled with shame and sorrow. I returned home, determined to tell my master, let me suffer what I would.

All this while I had no relish for the pleasures of this world. My whole desire was to be alone, that I might, without interruption, pour out my complaints. The sighs and groans of my troubled soul were sometimes heard by others, who, though joined in the same society, often asked me why I did so ; and some of them could not help wondering at me. But, alas ! they little understood my conflicts : and perhaps it was not necessary they should ; as the Father of mercies leads some in a more peaceable and quiet manner than others ; though it is certain the spirit must be wounded before it can be healed.

After I had been about nine months in this condition, the Lord, in great compassion to my poor, afflicted soul, threw the Life of Mr. John Janeway into my hands. This little book was made a most reviving cordial to me, and proved like the wine and oil poured into the wounds of the man that fell among thieves.

The part which was blessed to my soul was a letter sent by Mr. Janeway to an acquaintance of his who was exercised nearly in the same manner that I was. For the sake of those who may be tempted, and

yet may not have Mr. Janeway's Life, I beg leave to subjoin an extract from it.

“DEAR FRIEND,

“You say that you are troubled with blasphemous thoughts. So then they are your trouble, and neither sent for, nor welcome, and so are not assented to in your mind. [Tempted soul, is this the case with thee?] What then shall we say of them? If they were your own production, your heart would be delighted with its own issue.

“Sure then they are the injections of that wicked one, who is the accuser of the brethren, and the disturber of the peace of the people of God. Doth Satan use to employ his weapons, but against those that he is in fear of losing? He is not wont to assault his surest friends in this manner. Those that he has fast in his own possession, he leads on as softly as he can, fearing such disturbances would make them look about them. But those that have in some measure escaped his snare, he follows with all the discouragements he can.”

As soon as I read this the cloud vanished away, and I saw that those terrible blasphemies, and atheistical thoughts, under which I groaned so long, were the suggestions of the prince of darkness, and that I had no part or lot in the matter. When Satan found he was discovered, he fled, and my soul enjoyed a comfortable hope of seeing the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

The fears I had of sinking into hell were now in a great measure removed, and I could draw nigh to God with some degree of confidence.

For about a year after this, I rejoiced in hope

of experiencing the forgiveness of my sins, and of having the witness of His Spirit that I was a child of God. For though I could frequently rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and found the burden of guilt removed; yet I would not dare to say I was justified, though at times I was ready to think I was.

I remember one day, while my mind was strongly persuaded to believe I was forgiven, I went to the preacher in order to be certain of the matter. I told him my experience. He liked what I told him very well, but gave me no satisfactory answer. I said, "Well, sir, I believe the best way of coming to the knowledge of it is, to be much in prayer." He said, "It is:" so I left him as doubtful of my state as ever.

Some time after, when I went to renew my ticket, Mr. M'Nab asked me if I knew my sins were forgiven. I said, "No, sir." He asked me, "Why cannot you believe?" I said, "I feel so much corruption stirring within me, that I am afraid." Then he said, I was putting sanctification before justification; or, in other words, I was seeking to be made holy, before my sins were forgiven; but that this heart-purifying work began as soon as we were justified. I then thought I would begin to believe from that moment. Accordingly, I could soon say, with some degree of confidence, "Thou art my God." But my mind was more confirmed in this from a sermon Mr. M'Nab preached not long after, from these words: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward." I thought he preached this discourse on my account; for I was much tempted to cast my little confidence away. However, though I was encouraged for that time,



yet, because I did not feel that constant joy I expected, I let go my confidence, and walked in darkness as before.

About this time there came a man from the country, an old professor, who was very fond of encouraging those who were of a doubtful mind. The first time he saw me at the preaching he took a liking to me, and in a little while we became very intimate. Our constant conversation was about religion; by which means he got some knowledge of my experience, and would, upon every occasion, be encouraging me to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Often would he say, "Dare you deny that Christ is yours?" when I was often at a stand, what answer to give him; being afraid to say, Yes or No, lest I should tell a lie. At length, as he and I walked along one time, he said, "I believe you do not doubt that God is able to save you; but you do not believe He is willing." As soon as he uttered these words, the power of God rested upon me in a remarkable manner; all my doubts and fears vanished, and I was filled with faith and love. I could now no longer contain; but immediately cried out, "O yes, I believe He is willing to save me! and I see so much love in His heart towards me, that I should be the most ungrateful wretch in the world, if I doubted of His love any longer."

Now my heart rejoiced in the salvation of God; being inwardly persuaded, that Jesus loved me, and gave Himself for me, and that my sins were all forgiven me for His name's sake. I could now say, "O taste and see how gracious the Lord is! Hearken, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what He hath done for my soul: He hath brought me up out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay; He

hath turned my complaints into songs of thanksgiving ; He hath not only forgiven all my sins, but healed all my diseases : therefore doth my soul magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour."

For some time I walked in the light of God's countenance, and my mountain seemed to be very strong ; but Satan assaulted me again with redoubled fury, suggesting his old temptation, that there was no God. One morning in particular, while I was at the preaching, the enemy came in upon me with this temptation like a flood, so that I was well nigh overwhelmed in the mighty waters. I was so deeply exercised during the time of the preaching, that I knew nothing about the sermon after it was over. My friend who was an instrument of good to me waited after the sermon to speak to me ; and when he saw me, he asked how it was with my soul. I, being distressed in mind, answered him short, saying, "I am tempted," and so left him. However, that day the Lord appeared to my help, and delivered me. I think this was the last great conflict I had with the enemy on this head. It may not be amiss to remark here, that after this conflict I experienced such a manifestation of the presence of God, that I almost thought my nature wholly sanctified.

Soon after the enemy thrust sore at me from another quarter ; telling me that I was deceiving myself, and that the enjoyments which I experienced were the effects of a heated imagination. This temptation put me to a great stand for awhile, and almost prevailed upon me to give up my shield. But I thought I would weigh the matter well before I let it go ; so I reasoned in the following manner :—"The enjoyments I now experience make me

cleave close to God: 1. By praising Him for His goodness; 2. By delighting more and more in His ways; 3. By earnestly longing to drink deeper and deeper into the spirit of the meek and lowly Jesus; 4. By praying that everything in me contrary to His will may be utterly destroyed. These are some of the blessed effects of the enjoyments I feel. Now if the father of lies can prove that these flow from a heated imagination, I will give up the point; but not till then. But I am persuaded he cannot; as it does not appear that enthusiasm has these effects." Thus being delivered from these two temptations, I went on my way with some degree of comfort, and had a well-grounded hope full of immortality.

When I was enabled to turn my face towards Zion, I endeavoured to give all diligence to escape the wrath to come. To this end I not only denied myself of all ungodliness and worldly lusts, but, in some instances, even of that which was lawful. It was common with me to fast twenty-four hours at a time; and once, from Thursday night until Saturday morning. Add to this, my eagerness to redeem my time, so that I could hardly bear the thoughts of going to bed. I have stood reading and writing, in the winter season, sometimes till two o'clock in the morning, till the calves of my legs were quite numbed with cold; and scarcely ever did I go to bed, until so conquered by sleep that the book dropped out of my hand. But though I was last in bed, I was generally the first up; so that I seldom got more than four hours' sleep. Five o'clock in the morning seldom caught me upon my pillow; for as I went to bed with reluctance, I stayed in it as short a time as I could. And whatever time I was up before the preaching, I employed either on my knees

or in the Bible, or in some other good book: add to these, hard labour in my business, deep thinking, much reading, fierce temptations, and a wounded spirit! All these together bore heavily upon my constitution, and so impaired my health, that I was filled with wind, and contracted a bad digestion to such a degree, that the food I took, merely to support nature, lay like lead in my stomach. At last I became burdensome to myself, and was distressed above measure.

But Satan, who always watches his opportunity to deceive the simple, took advantage of this, and suggested that I was a glutton, or I should not be so oppressed with my food. As I believed him, though I took care to eat moderately, and sometimes would not eat at all, I frequently concluded that my belly would destroy my soul. On this account I have often stretched myself upon the floor, and twisted and twined in pain, crying to the Lord for deliverance. One thing I remarked, that the Sabbath-day was the day of sorest trial to me: so that I have denied myself of all food the most part of that day, endeavouring, if possible, to worship God in spirit and in truth.

For nearly two years I was oppressed in this manner. And though I had frequent manifestations of the goodness of God, and could at times rejoice exceedingly in His salvation; yet it was, in many respects, a dark and cloudy day.

Meantime I was much stirred up to seek after that holiness without which no man can see the Lord; and I might say, with Jane Cooper, "that I seemed to enjoy all I wanted, while I pressed after that which I had not attained." Such sweet consolation, and glorious liberty with God in prayer, did I experience,

while I sought this blessing, that it was the very delight of my soul to be found prostrate before Him. But this holy fervour of spirit, and earnest longing for the full image of God, was in some measure cooled, partly by yielding to the risings of corrupt nature, and partly by the reasonings of an old professor.

The first time he opposed me was either the first or second time after I met in the select society. This glorious meeting, which was always attended with the presence and power of God, and was made as marrow and fatness to my soul, he represented as a most dangerous and destructive meeting; that it would puff me up with pride. Having a high opinion of his judgment, I was almost determined never to go near it more. But in the evening I opened my mind to brother Gibson, who urged me to meet again; otherwise I believe I should have wholly declined it.

Some time after, the Lord stirred me up again to seek this unspeakable blessing; when it was my delight to be found in the company of those who, I believed, had attained, or, at least, were eagerly pressing after it. I generally left them with my soul on full stretch for God. Yet, when returning from the company of these servants of God, with my heart panting after Him, some temptation would surely be in the way. By this means I have been often stripped of my happiness, yea, and pulled back when I seemed near obtaining the prize. This has often distressed me exceedingly, and cost me many a tear.

One who had entered into this rest lent me Mr. Fletcher's Treatise on Christian Perfection, which was made a great blessing to me, both in convincing

my judgment, and quickening my soul more abundantly. The part which was chiefly blessed to me was his address to imperfect believers, who believed the doctrine of Christian perfection attainable. One night, when my little family was gone to bed, I took up this book to read, and as I read I met with the following words :—" If thou wilt absolutely come to Mount Zion in a triumphal chariot, or make thy entrance into the New Jerusalem upon a prancing horse, thou art likely never to come there. Leave, then, all thy lordly misconceptions behind ; and humbly follow thy King, who makes His entry into the typical Jerusalem meek and lowly, riding upon an ass, yea, upon a colt, the foal of an ass."

And as I was at this time sensible of my pride and self-will, I said in my heart, " O, this is the way ! I want Him to come in His meek and lowly mind." I immediately laid down the book, and went to prayer. I pleaded with God, and put Him in remembrance as He commanded me, in a manner I never did before. " O Lord," said I, " Thy design in creating me was that I might glorify Thy name and enjoy Thee for ever ! Let me therefore, I beseech Thee, answer the end of my being. O, let me live to Thy glory ! Thou seest, Lord, that I cannot glorify Thy name as I ought, unless Thou makest an end of sin, and writest Thy law of love on my heart. Lord, hast Thou not promised to take away the heart of stone, and to give me a heart of flesh ? Hast Thou not promised to pour clean water upon me, and to cleanse me from all my filthiness, and from all my idols ? Hast Thou not promised to circumcise my heart, that I may love Thee with all my heart and soul ? O Lord, was it not for this very end that Thy only Son was manifested in the flesh, even to

destroy the works of the devil? to deliver me from all my inward enemies, that I may serve Thee without fear, in holiness and righteousness all my days? Therefore, O Lord, make this the day of salvation! Now, now, O Lord, let the work be done! Amen."

While I thus poured out my heart before Him, I seemed to enter into the holy of holies, by faith in the blood of the Lamb. My heart expanded to receive my holy Bridegroom, when He came, as it were, riding into my soul, in His chariot of love, with all His sanctifying grace. I could do nothing now but bless and magnify the name of the Lord for this wonderful manifestation. My only language was, "Glory, glory, glory be to God!"

What tongue can tell, or heart conceive, the heaven that was opened in my heart at that moment! It might well be called "joy unspeakable and full of glory!" After offering up my tribute of praise to Him who visited me in so extraordinary a manner, I went to bed full of love, of heaven, of God.

In the year 1780 my wife lay in, and about that time my business was so slack, that I was several weeks out of work; by which means we were brought very low. In this extremity a kind friend asked me how much would set me up. I mentioned a certain sum, which he offered to lend me without bond or interest, until I was able to pay him; urging, at the same time, the necessity of my entering into business, as I had a growing family. Such a generous offer surprised me; but I could not consent to accept of it until I had consulted my wife. Accordingly, that night I spoke to her; but she did not seem forward to embrace it. However, thinking it might be a call of Providence, I at length consented.



I then set about collecting the materials necessary for my business ; and after a good deal of trouble completed my design. Having procured materials, the next thing was to look for work. To this end, I entered into the company of booksellers ; printed large posting-bills and handbills in the most elegant manner, and had them posted about the city, sent to the booksellers, and dispersed in the coffee-houses ; but all to little purpose ; for in the course of about eight months I did not earn as much as would support myself ; and had it not been for what little my wife earned, I believe we must have starved. For, not making a proper estimate when my friend spoke to me, I was obliged to enter deeper into the affair than I expected ; which exposed me to temptation, when I saw myself, as it were, deprived of the means of discharging the debts I had contracted. At times, indeed, I could cast my whole care upon the Lord ; but then the thought, "How shall I get out of debt?" would again perplex me.

At last, seeing it was in vain to continue in that line, I came to a resolution to sell all, and pay everybody as far as it went. Accordingly, I did sell all ; but most of what I had, greatly under the price I gave for them. I then discharged some debts I had contracted with those who either could not or would not bear with me ; and with the remainder I made my friend an unworthy return for his kindness, as it fell short upwards of twenty pounds of what he had lent me. However, he accepted of it, without troubling me for the rest. But notwithstanding he patiently bore with me, I was not satisfied. And therefore, that I might be the better able to pay the whole, I determined to go to London.

Accordingly, with a heavy heart, I sailed for Holy-

head, in company with brother James Martin, and brother Pilmoor. We travelled together to Chester, from whence they went to Leeds, and I to London. In this journey I endured much hardship; being obliged to ride almost from Holyhead to London on the coach-box.

In about three days after my arrival I got into work, where I continued for about a fortnight; but work being slack, my employer wanted to lower my wages. I believe I should have taken what he offered, only some men in the house had a guinea per week, and I thought it might hurt them if I did. On this, I made known my situation to Mr. Boardman, who advised me to return home, as soon as possible. However, that I might be clear, I inquired at several printing-offices in London for work, but could not get any; then I determined to go to Ireland with Mr. Boardman. Only there seemed to be an objection; namely, my want of money. But that he removed by bearing my expenses. While I was in London, Mr. Wesley arrived from the Leeds Conference; but I had not courage to speak to him, all the time he stayed in town.

In my return to Dublin, I was near finishing my course. For, going through Wales, I was suddenly pitched off the coach-box. But providentially having hold of the iron, I wheeled, and my foot rested upon the spring. I went off head foremost; and though the whole weight of my body was on my left arm, I was so supported by an invisible power, that it seemed no weight at all. I have since almost shuddered at my dangerous situation, when sleeping on the top of the coach. Surely it was nothing less than the Divine hand that prevented me from falling and waking in eternity.

When he came to Poolbeg, Mr. Boardman went on shore, and left the care of the luggage to me. But before he went, he employed an open boat, instead of the wherry, which was near costing me my life, and him the loss of his goods. From thence we sailed peaceably enough till we got between the walls of the river Liffey, when a wherry in full sail darted through the river the contrary way, and when she got pretty near us, the man at the helm tacked about, and ran her head against the side of our little boat; where her bowsprit came across my back, and pressed me down with great violence, while our boat was near upset: but the Lord brought me through this also, without receiving any hurt.

February 6th, 1782, one of the members of the House of Commons for the city being dead, and two or three candidates offering themselves, my two fellow-apprentices and I, being free of the city, were requested by our master to attend the corporation at the music-hall. We all accordingly met there with the three candidates, in the grove-room, so called from its being painted like a grove. This was over the ball-room, and supposed to be twenty feet high or more. Alderman W—— arose and spoke first; then Mr. T—— H—— made a speech. Then the third candidate, Counsellor P——n, beginning with a feeble voice, the place was all silence, when, lo! in a moment, the beam broke close by the wall, and the floor sunk, and about three hundred persons went down in an instant. I had just time to perceive them sinking through the cloud of dust which ascended, before I fell myself; but, as God would have it, no one fell upon me. My fall was upon the pit of my stomach, which nearly knocked out my breath. For some time we were so encompassed

with darkness, that we could not rightly tell where we were ; but the most horrid cries that could well be conceived were uttered by those whose limbs were broken. As we lay, not knowing which way to flee, some cried out, " Lie still, and we shall be all safe." I thought they perceived the roof giving way ; and as I was on the top of the rest, I gave myself up for lost, expecting every moment to be dashed in pieces. I lay as close as I could, patiently waiting my doom ; but finding the roof did not fall as I expected, I raised my head, looked about, and discovered an open window just at hand. I then arose ; but Sir E—— N——, who was under me, cried out to me to take the boards off his legs, which he said were broken. This I did as well as I could, and lent him a hand to help him up. I then looked down, and saw **my** suffering fellow-mortals like drowning men, stretching forth their arms, and grasping at the first thing that presented itself. One of them caught me by the hand, and nearly pulled me down ; but I disengaged myself, and made to the window, where I had to help a man through, who had his foot broken, and a desperate hole made in his forehead, so that the interior part of his skull might be seen. After him I went out myself, and, by the mercy of God, escaped without a broken bone, or the loss of a drop of blood.

When I got out I seemed like one returning from the dead, or coming from the field of battle. My face was covered with paleness, and it seemed as if I had bathed part of my garments in the blood of the slain. I went over to Mr. Dugdale's ; but he not being come home, I thought he was buried in the ruins. So I went back to look for him, and turned over some of the rubbish ; but could not find him. In the mean time he was carried home in a

chair, with some of his ribs broken, and otherwise greatly hurt, so that his life hung in doubt for some time. While ranging about, I espied my other fellow-apprentice, not able to move, being greatly hurt in the thigh, and having one of his skirts torn off by something that caught him in the fall. Several others sat in the utmost agony with their legs and thighs broken, and otherwise shockingly mangled. Very few escaped unhurt more or less. Nine or ten, at least, died of the wounds and bruises they received; and others live disabled, to perpetuate the memory of this dreadful event. When I got home I was bled, and fainted away. My wife thought I was going to expire; but I soon came to myself, and in a few days was enabled to go to my work as usual.

This same year it was impressed on my mind, that I ought to give myself up to the blessed work of calling sinners to repentance. But then a damp came upon me, when I considered my unfaithfulness to His grace. Hence I was ready to conclude it could never be, that such a vile creature should be chosen to labour in the vineyard of the Lord. But, blessed be His adorable name! I can say, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." At first some objection was made to me, on account of my family. But about Christmas, 1783, I received a letter from Mr. Wesley, the substance of which was as follows:—

"DEAR BROTHER,

"NOT only Mr. Smith, but several others, gave a satisfactory account of you at the Conference. Mr. Watkinson writes me word, that as Robert Blake

has left him, he is in great want of help. I have no objections, if your wife is willing, for you to go upon trial to Limerick.

“JOHN WESLEY.”

Accordingly, I began immediately to prepare for my departure. My Dublin friends assisted me very much; and on Saturday, January 11th, 1783, I took leave of my wife and child, my dear acquaintance, and native place, and with an aching heart set out.

I stopped at Naas to refresh myself and my horse: and, having a room to myself, with an aching heart I opened the Bible on these words, “Go ye forth of Babylon; flee from the Chaldeans, with the voice of singing; declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the ends of the earth; saying, The Lord hath redeemed His servant Jacob.” (Isaiah xlviii. 20.) I reached Munstereven that night; but being much fatigued, I lay down with a heart burdened with inexpressible grief. But the next morning I arose quite composed; and as it was the Sabbath-day I rode to Portarlinton, and preached twice.

On Monday I left Portarlinton, and set off for my Circuit. On the way I was much tried with the severity of the weather, and deeply exercised about my call to preach. But I found a willingness to endure hardships, if the Lord would be pleased to make me an instrument of good.

My great Preserver conducted me in safety through hail, rain, and wind, until I got to Cashel, the first place in my Circuit. I entered the city in peace, and rode safely along, until I came to the street where I was to lodge. Then my horse suddenly fell. I was thrown over his neck upon my head, and dashed violently against the stones. Here I lay for

a little time, stretched upon my back. When I arose I found no great hurt, though some who saw me fall wondered I was not killed. One of the drunkards of the town very civilly conducted me to my lodging; but the people of the house looked astonished at me, and did not seem well inclined to receive me; because, seeing me so dirty and in such company, they thought I had been drinking; but my guide strongly assured them I had fallen from my horse, which helped to gain me a more friendly reception. I thought Satan was angry with me; but the God of my life overruled his malice.

During the short time I travelled this Circuit, I had severe trials, within and without; but the Lord comforted me in all my tribulations. My wife was sick about five weeks, and was so forsaken by her acquaintances, that she might have nearly adopted the words of the Psalmist: "I am counted with them that go down to the pit, free among the dead." The letters I received from her in this dark and cloudy day were like the tidings brought to Job, one weightier than another. Yet I was enabled to lay the matter before the Lord, and found unspeakable liberty. No outward trials whatever were sufficient to shake my confidence. I was strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. O Thou God of love! Thou alone canst tell the happiness I enjoyed in Thee, while wading through the deep waters.

One morning in particular, while I was speaking from "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life," I was so filled with joy, that it was as if I had got upon the wings of an eagle, and was soaring to endless day.



But that which distressed me most was, my not having so many seals of my ministry as I expected. One day, while my mind was thus exercised, having the Bible in my hands, I opened upon these words, "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain." (Joel ii. 1.) I replied immediately, "Lord, put the trumpet to my mouth, and I will blow it." That night I found a peculiar degree of liberty and courage in delivering my message to the people. However, nothing would satisfy me, but hearing the people roar under the sermon, from a sense of their misery; and, on the other hand, shouting for joy, through a sense of pardoning love. And as I laboured with all my might, and endeavoured to walk close with God through the day, I expected that it would be the case; and because it was not, (except in one or two instances,) I was almost ready to conclude I was not sent of God.

But though I did not often perceive those marks, which I laid down as proofs of my call to the ministry, yet I am now well assured I was doing the will of God, from the comfortable testimonies of the people at class-meetings and lovefeasts. And I think it would be well for every young preacher especially, to meet the classes whenever he can. Nothing has a greater tendency to lift up the hands that hang down, than to hear those who have sat under us relating the good they have received thereby. Another remark I would make is, that we are not to look upon all our labours as lost because the seed we sow does not spring up immediately, or, at least, is not made known to us at the time. God makes this known only so far as it is necessary to enable us to go on in our work with humble boldness.

In April I attended the Conference; and from

thence was sent to labour with Mr. R. Armstrong and Mr. J. Kerr, on the Balliconnell Circuit. I may say, we loved as brethren, and kept the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. The party spirit which reigned throughout that Circuit the year before, was almost entirely removed. And some good was done to saints and sinners: we had therefore reason to bless God who did not suffer us to labour in vain.

The second day I travelled in this Circuit I was most dreadfully wet. It rained upon me for four hours, to such a degree, that the covers of the books in my pockets were stripping off with the wet. When I got to my quarters, I thought I should have met with sympathizing friends; but they seemed not to think much about me. I suppose it was permitted for a trial of my patience, as I found this family exceedingly friendly ever after. I dried myself as well as I could, and got some cold milk to refresh me after my toil. But I went to bed, slept most comfortably, and rose next morning without the least cold. After breakfast I rode to my destined place: when I went in, I could not see the face of a Methodist; which discouraged me much. After dinner, the day was very gloomy; which helped to depress my spirits more. I entered into a train of reasoning, till I came to a resolution to quit the work, and return home. Accordingly, I sent immediately to the field for my horse, clapped on my saddle-bags, mounted him, and rode off, determined never to travel more.

But I had a conviction I was doing wrong; and feared, as I was flying from the work, I should fall and break my neck. But so odious was the cross, that I had neither inclination nor power to resist.

When I had got about five miles, I met a member of the society I was flying from. The woman, though she never saw me before, without asking whether I was a preacher or not, stopped me, and said, "What is the reason you are turning your back on E——?" I looked earnestly at her, and said, "How do you know me?" On which she pointed to a young man, who told her I was the person he directed to C——n the night before. She then said, as if she knew my heart, "I suppose you do not mean to travel this Circuit any more?" I said, "I do not mean to travel at all any more: I cannot stand it; and therefore I am going home." Then I rode away from her; but my heart was ready to break with grief.

As I pursued my journey, I rode into Enniskillen to get a bait for my horse; but, it being fair-day, and the town greatly crowded, I, being a stranger, did not know where to apply for it. While I was looking about, a stranger, one of the society of Tonnelummin, came up to me, and said, "Sir, do you want anything?" I said, "I want a feed of oats for my horse." By and by another came up to me, and smiled; but I knew him not: however, I soon found he was a Methodist. This simple circumstance, I believe, was the appointment of Providence, as it helped to prevent my going home as I intended. After getting the oats, I rode on to Mr. H. D.'s, the general steward, thinking to spend that night and the Sabbath-day there, and on Monday to set off for Dublin. Mr. D. reasoned the case very much with me, to keep me on the Circuit; but I could not then be brought fully to consent. However, the young men of Tonnelummin persuaded me to go thither, where I preached twice that evening.

At last I was prevailed on to stay until Dr. C. came into the Circuit.

During this interval I had many deep exercises of mind. I could hardly look upon myself to be a preacher, and I thought it absolutely impossible that I should submit to travel. I was altogether unwilling to continue, and would have been glad of any pretence to return home : I almost wished for a rupture, or a broken leg, or anything that might appear a lawful excuse for it ; for I was afraid to go home without one. While I was thus exercised, I received a letter from my wife, encouraging me to persevere in the work of God ; part of which was as follows :—

“ DUBLIN, *May 14th*, 1783.

“ MY DEAR,

“ THE receiving of your letter gave me joy ; but on reading it, my heart did truly feel for you. Yet, on consideration, I think it is a good sign that the devil does so much strive to hinder you. He fears you will lay your shoulders to the Lord’s work, and his power will be shaken ; and on this account you may expect all the opposition that the prince of darkness can make.

“ Are you afraid of the devil, who is himself held in chains by your Master ? Is not God on your side ? Then fear not. This temptation is for the trial of your faith. The Lord will make your cup to overflow after it, and bless you in His own way.

“ I remain

“ Your affectionate wife,

“ ALICE JOYCE.”

I now wrote a letter for Dr. C., acquainting him with my objections against travelling. When I came

to Killeshandra, I gave him the letter. He took much pains to remove my objections. At last I submitted for that time ; but soon after the temptation returned with greater violence.

Accordingly, I wrote to the doctor a second time, requesting permission to quit travelling ; when, getting another letter which encouraged me to go on, I found a willingness to sacrifice my all for the sake of the Gospel. My mind being once more set at liberty, I preached the next morning with remarkable power ; and I believe not many of the congregation went away unbled. From that hour, through mercy, I was enabled to devote myself fully to the work of God, and to endure hardness with cheerfulness. And though I had lived twenty-eight years and upwards in Dublin, I never, during my stay in the north, murmured at the hardest labour, or the coarsest food I met with.

My wife also endured some hardship upon this Circuit ; yet she could not wish the cross removed. But what she wanted in temporals the Lord made up in spirituals. It was on this Circuit He graciously restored her to the light of His countenance, filling her with peace and joy in believing. Here also the Lord favoured her with the affection of the people ; several of whom were grieved at her departure.

Upon the whole : I have reason to be thankful for my appointment to the north ; and trust I shall never lose my affection for my dear friends in those parts, or the grateful remembrance which I retain for the many little tokens of love they showed me for Christ's sake.

In July, 1784, I was appointed assistant in the Athlone Circuit ; an office I saw myself very unfit for. But I cast my care upon the Lord, and obtained

help of Him, so as to get through with satisfaction to some and profit to myself.

This year the Lord was pleased to give me favour in the sight of the people, and to bless me with success in my labours. He enlarged the borders of Zion, and made me willing to spend and be spent for Him.

In January, 1785, I went to Dublin, intending to stay about two nights; but I was seized with sickness, which detained me longer than I intended. I believe this was the appointment of an all-gracious Providence, as I experienced such a measure of Divine love as was beyond what I could ask or think.

After being in my Circuit a considerable time, the letters I received from Dublin, respecting the work, were so delightful, that I was desirous of seeing my native place once more. On my arrival, I found many much alive to God; by means of those men of God, J. R. and A. B., and that mother in Israel, sister R. I soon caught a measure of their spirit, and was stirred up to seek for purity of heart; and was not without hope of getting a draught of that water of life before I left Dublin.

The 9th of January, I was deeply wounded in my spirit, on account of indwelling sin. I saw it was like a flood ready to overwhelm me. I groaned to be delivered; and abhorred myself on account of it. That night I went and sat with S. R. and S. B., and we talked about Christian perfection till Mr. R. came into the room: it being late, he said to me, "You must pray for us." Being distressed, I said, "I want some one to pray for me." We kneeled down, and S. R. wrestled with God in my behalf. Yet I went home much oppressed, which was visible to all. One asked me if anything was the matter?

I was unwilling to tell; but on their pressing me, I told them, my carnal mind was the cause. After family prayer, I entered my chamber, and stood awhile leaning against the wall. The language of my heart was, "Lord, I am nothing! Lord, I am nothing!" After which I went to prayer, and, in a moment, found power to obey that command, "My son, give Me thy heart."

I then arose from my knees, and went to bed in peace, praising the Lord for all His goodness. Notwithstanding this change, I was afraid to speak in a positive manner what the Lord had done for me. I walked in the light, with my heart full of love to God. After my departure from thence I wrote to S. R. as follows:—

"ATHLONE, *January 31st, 1785.*

"FIRST. In my former state, though often deeply distressed on account of my depravity, yet I could not freely part with all; so that when I prayed against this or that evil, which beset me most, it was with fear, and a secret unwillingness to part with that I prayed against. In my present state I do not pray that I may give up this or that evil; for I have cheerfully given up all. Yet I feel a necessity of constantly looking unto Jesus, that I may not be ensnared again.

"Secondly. In my former state unprofitable thoughts sometimes carried me away. But now, I feel both inclination and power to reject them immediately.

"Thirdly. Though I frequently was enabled to delight myself in the Lord, yet there were certain times that I seemed to be forgetful of Him, so far as to lose the happiness arising from communion with



Him. But now I feel that promise made good, 'He will keep them in perfect peace, whose minds are stayed on Him.'

"Fourthly. In my former state, I loved Christian conversation; yet I was often ensnared by trifling conversation. But now Christian conversation is my constant aim, unless so far as I am obliged to speak about other necessary things.

"Fifthly. In my former state, though I was sensible of my unworthiness, yet I had not so clear a discovery of my short-comings in every particular, and of course could not see the necessity of keeping close to the fountain of my Redeemer's blood.

"Lastly. In my former state, I was often harassed with doubts and fears whether I should be admitted to behold the face of God in glory. In my present, I feel no doubt, at any time, of my being for ever with Him.

"This is the change my God has wrought in me, of which I am as sensible as that I exist. Yet I find, I am in an enemy's country, and feel myself attacked by various temptations: but by looking to the Captain of my salvation, I am 'more than conqueror.' "

I cannot but admire the great goodness of God in thus manifesting Himself to me at this very time; as I had a variety of trials to encounter, which must have made my hands hang down, had He not prepared me for them by a double portion of His grace. By this I was enabled to add to my faith courage; no hardship could make me afraid. I counted not my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy. When riding in the midst of my pain, which was often beyond expression, I have been

constrained to cry, "O the honour of being an ambassador for Christ!" So many precious smiles of His face have rested upon me, while travelling round my Circuit, that every cross was light, every rough way smooth, and every crooked place straight.

O Lord, grant that I may not be found among the slumbering watchmen, or lazy, careless shepherds, when Thou shalt appear to reward Thy faithful labourers; and to require, at the slumbering watchman's hand, the blood of those who have perished through their unfaithfulness!

MATTHIAS JOYCE.

ATHLONE, *October 14th*, 1785.

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IN the Minutes of Conference for the year 1814, the following notice of Mr. Joyce's death and character is given:—

MATTHIAS JOYCE, a brother whose memory is precious to all who knew him. He was early in life converted from the errors of Popery. A full and pleasing account is given in the Methodist Magazine of 1786 of the progress of the work of grace in his soul till his call to the ministry, and of his travels and labours in various parts of Ireland. He was a man of a remarkably loving and peaceful disposition; a wise, acceptable, and successful preacher; much tried in his family by various afflictions, which no doubt preyed on his spirits, and helped to bring on that debility, both of body and mind, which disqualified him for preaching during the last three years of his life. He was engaged in the ministry thirty years, and died, as he had lived, an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile.

THE LIFE  
OF  
MR. JAMES ROGERS.

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WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

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SINCE I first began to recommend the great love of God in Christ Jesus to others, I have had many solicitations to give some account of His dealings with my own soul; yet I never could prevail on myself to attempt it till now. But having kept no journal, it cannot be expected that the following pages should contain anything more than a recital of a few particular circumstances which made the deepest impression upon my memory at the time they occurred. If these, or any of them, are made a blessing to my friends, let them give God the glory.

I was born in the North Riding of Yorkshire, in a large village called Marsk, in February, 1749. I was put to school early, and taught to read the Scriptures from a child; in some parts of which I found singular delight.

The Spirit of God began to strive with me when I was about three or four years old. On hearing a passing-bell, or seeing a corpse, I was very thoughtful, and would often ask my parents pertinent ques-

tions about a future state. On seeing lightning, or hearing a loud clap of thunder, my fears were usually alarmed to a high degree; and the more so as an impression always followed me, that it was God speaking from the clouds; and as I greatly expected, at these times, that He was just descending to judge the world, I would run to the door to see Him come! Such ideas as these were much increased and confirmed by several dreams, which I had from my infancy, about death, judgment, heaven, and hell.

When I was about ten years of age, I dreamed one night I saw fire bursting out of the earth in several parts; that it raged so furiously, and spread with such rapidity, that in a few seconds the whole globe was but one blaze! I thought I saw all the inhabitants of the place where I lived struck with inexpressible consternation and horror; and especially the bad people, as I called them, whom I had known to curse and swear, and get drunk; with many of my playfellows, who were accustomed to lie, and cheat, and play on the Sabbath: these I thought set up such dreadful shrieks and yells as were enough to pierce a heart of stone. As I looked up, the face of the sky seemed totally overspread with blackness. Instantly the forked lightnings began to play, till the heavens were all in one glare, and such loud peals of thunder followed, as I had never heard. The sun I could see no more; but I thought I got a transient sight of the moon, which appeared larger than ever I had seen it before, and as red as a huge mass of blood. The heavens seemed all in motion, and were exceedingly agitated; they appeared to work, and heave, and rock from side to side, till not one star was left remaining:

thus was that scripture fulfilled, "And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind." The sky seemed next to pass away, or, as I remember to have read, "to be wrapped together as a scroll." My favourite passage I now saw fulfilled; namely, "And the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." (Daniel vii. 9, 10.)

The thoughts I had about the deplorable state of my guilty neighbours now seemed swallowed up in a most painful anxiety for my own safety. I was waiting in expectation of a summons to the bar; but, deeply conscious that I was unprepared, was alarmed to such a degree that I awoke.

After recollecting myself a little, and finding I was still an inhabitant of this world, my joy was inexpressible! Nevertheless it had a most solemn effect upon my mind, and the impression remained for many weeks. How true are those words in Job xxxiii.: "God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then He openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction." From this time I began to feel great desires to be taught how I might obtain a preparation to meet my Judge with comfort.

On the winter evenings several neighbours frequently came to sit and spend an hour in friendly

conversation with my father, and oftentimes upon religious subjects, according to their light. To these I was very attentive; and when my hour for bed came, I would beg hard to sit a little longer, though I had not courage to urge the chief reason which induced me, namely, a desire to hear what might be said upon these subjects.

I remember one night in particular, many queries were proposed about salvation: none of them thought it possible that any certainty could be attained in this life, whether they should be saved at last or not. But the general opinion was, that our actions would all be weighed in the day of judgment; and if our good deeds over-balanced our bad ones, we should go to heaven; but if the contrary, we should go to hell. But some dissented a little from this, and thought, Nay, but God was merciful, and had sent His Son to die for sinners; and that their best way would be to amend their lives, and do all they could, and Christ would make up the rest. One of these they all agreed must be the way; and, to confirm them in this conclusion, one observed that the parson of the parish was exactly of the same mind.

I endeavoured to satisfy myself with these determinations, but I could not. It was all, alas! left at uncertainty; and this would not do for one that was daily expecting a call to appear before the Judge of quick and dead.

However, I thought no way so likely to succeed, as to say my prayers regularly morning and evening, and be as careful as possible in refraining from bad words, especially from telling lies, playing on the Sabbath-day, neglecting my book, quarrelling with my schoolfellows, doing anything I was taught to

believe was wrong, or keeping company with such wicked boys as led me into the way of such temptations.

At eleven years of age I was called to bear a severe trial by the death of one of the tenderest and best of fathers. He had been subject for many years to what we call the heart-colic, and was often apparently near death. At such times, when every other hope seemed to fail, I used to get into a corner, fall down upon my knees, and there pray and weep, and wrestle with God to spare his life: and though I knew not the Lord, yet I often felt a confidence that He heard me, and would grant my request; and when I found it so, such gratitude and uncommon sweetness would rest upon my mind for many days as is better felt than expressed. However, he died at last of that disorder, after a few days' illness.

For some time I was quite inconsolable; and had I been possessed of the whole world, I would gladly have given it all to have died with him, if I had been prepared. But as I knew I was not, I earnestly begged of my eldest brother (then upwards of twenty) to tell me what I must do to be saved; believing as soon as I was ready for heaven, God would certainly take me, which was all that I wished for. But alas! I gained no ground, for want (I believe) of proper instruction; for as yet the light of the glorious Gospel had not shined in that neighbourhood.

My father leaving no will, and his little property consisting chiefly of land, it fell of course to my eldest brother; so that the family soon after became dispersed. I was removed to some distance among strangers; but I found favour in their sight, and was suffered to want for nothing. Here I got a new set



of acquaintance, but equally destitute of the knowledge of God.

It pleased Him, however, whose ways are in the mighty waters, and His judgments in the great deep, to find means to teach me the knowledge of His salvation.

A wild young man, a few doors from where I lived, contrary to the will of his parents, and against the advice of all his friends, would go to sea; but he had not been there long before he was heartily weary, and ran away from his master. He was ashamed, however, to return home, and equally afraid of being known, as it was in the height of the French war, when the press was very hot. He therefore set out for some inland town, and took up his residence for some months in Northampton. Here the poor prodigal had time for reflection, and began to think on the mercies he had slighted in his father's house. By this strange chain of providences it was that he became acquainted with the Methodists, a small body of whom were in this place. He was invited by them, and afterwards went constantly to the preaching. His conscience being very soon thoroughly awakened, he readily joined their little society, and became a steady member.

After several months, he took courage, and wrote home to his friends. His father, always tender over him, was filled with joy to hear of his long-lost son; and went to the captain he had sailed with, got the indenture at a considerable expense, and the matter was made up; which happy circumstance no sooner reached the young man, than he set off, and returned to his father's house with a glad heart.

His old acquaintance flocked to see him upon his arrival, and expected feasting, merriment, and, as

they call it, great doings. But the tables were now turned. He began to exhort us all to "flee from the wrath to come;" enforcing the necessity of repentance and the new birth, stating that old things must be done away, and all things become new; and he observed, that, instead of gluttony, drinking, singing, and dancing, we ought rather to fall upon our knees, and give God thanks for all His benefits.

His former companions gaped and stared at him as a monster; and some of them came near him no more, swearing he was turned Methodist, that his brain was hurt, and that, if they did not keep from him, he would convert them all, and make them as mad as himself. But these things had a very different effect upon me: I looked upon him as some angelic being dropped from the clouds, and was affected in an extraordinary manner while he was speaking to the rest; but as he took no notice of me, I concluded I was too vile for such a favourite of heaven to stoop to. I went away trembling and speechless, seeking a place to vent my grief in: but it enhanced my misery, when I found that I could not weep; for my heart seemed as black as hell, and as hard as a stone. I prayed again and again; but, as I thought, to little purpose. However, I was clearly convinced that this was the way, and there was no other; but then I thought it was impossible I should ever feel the happiness which that young man experienced, unless I could go to those people, and to that place where he found so blessed a change. I inquired what distance Northampton was, thinking to set out unknown to anyone, having a degree of confidence that God would take care of me; but finding it was near two hundred miles, and not knowing

one foot of the road, and being not yet fourteen years of age, I was quite discouraged ; and, being no longer able to contain my sorrow, I begged one of the family with whom I resided to intercede for me with the young man, that he would only speak to me ; thinking that if he would take notice of such an unworthy creature, I should be one of the happiest of mortals. To my great surprise, he not only embraced the first opportunity of speaking to me, but seemed to rejoice over me as one that had found great spoil. This brought to my mind that scripture, "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." And as it is with them, so I proved it to be with His people here.

From that time I date my acquaintance with the people of God, and to this day I have preferred them to all others. With what gratitude and delight have I often reflected upon and repeated those lines,—

"What a mercy is this,  
What a heaven of bliss,  
How unspeakably happy am I!  
Gather'd into the fold,  
With Thy people enroll'd,  
With Thy people to live and to die!"

The first society I had intimacy with was in Guisborough, a small market-town in the north of Yorkshire, and about eight miles distant from where I lived. This was the nearest place where there was preaching ; and the road to it was not very good, as it lay over some mountains, and through several lonely woods, which were rendered more so on very dark winter evenings. But my need was such, that I never thought a moment on these discouragements. Sometimes I had company ; at other times

I had none: but I do not remember that (when business would permit) I ever neglected to go regularly once a fortnight, on (I think) the Tuesday evenings; and this was all the preaching we then had.

Some time after this, two or three of us began to think, if possible, of getting the preaching at the village where I lived. We spoke to the preachers, who appeared very willing to make a trial, and accordingly visited us occasionally a few times. The word was attended with power, and they soon joined about fifteen of us in a class, and afterwards took us into their Plan. We now thought ourselves highly honoured indeed. Our little number increased to about twenty; and then the enemy, who had hitherto been pretty quiet, began to show himself. His chief attack was upon the few united together to "work out their own salvation with fear and trembling." Against these he roared horribly. At our preachings and public meetings, the sons of Belial would assemble in a most shameless and tumultuous manner; but they were never permitted to hurt anyone, although they spoke many great and swelling words.

Once while one of our friends was at prayer, and I and a few more were kneeling by him, a stout old woman, with vengeance in her countenance, advanced, having a sharp broad axe, (such as carpenters hew wood with,) with many dreadful imprecations against the Methodists. She cursed horribly, and swore she would be the death of some one, if she was hanged for it the next hour. She stood a few seconds with her arms extended; no one offered to oppose her; but we prayed the more fervently, till, just as she appeared to be making a blow at the young man's head then at prayer, the axe fell to the floor, as if the use of her hands was perfectly taken away, and she

retired as fast as she could into another room, still cursing the youth for being the ruin of her son and daughter; as she was sure those "false prophets" would never have come there but for him; and she did not know where it would stop, but was sure the devil would get them all. She used many such like expressions. Not long after this she was called to give up her accounts to God.

But these persecutions because of the word proved a sifting time; and many, who countenanced the preaching at first, appeared by and by to have been mere "stony-ground hearers." Nay, even our own society was soon diminished to about twelve. These held out for a few months, till the leader and his wife, with the man also who took in the preachers, were taken to Abraham's bosom. The death of these three in so short a time as a few months was an awful visitation. Those of us that remained proving unfaithful, the candlestick was very soon after removed to another place. Two or three of us followed it, and continued for a little time; but, by and by, our love also waxed cold.

Though I was now about fifteen years of age, I had never been able to say that my sins were forgiven. Nevertheless, my desires were strong, and often did the Lord give me a foretaste of His love; but, having no one near to speak to, the adversary gained an advantage over me. I gave way by little and little; and my old companions, soon observing me less grave and circumspect, began to solicit me to join with them as formerly. This I refused for a time, but not with the resolution and steadfastness I had done before; so that they were encouraged to use other means of gaining me over. With what shame and sorrow of heart do I still reflect, that in

a little time I joined them in parties of pleasure, and went from bad to worse, till I became tenfold more a child of hell than ever! For, having once given way, my conscience became my constant tormentor day and night. I compared myself to that unhappy spirit who, being cast out of his habitation, went about seeking rest, but found none. Thus I continued for upwards of two years, running as if in haste for damnation, with a lighted candle in my hand; striving to stifle conscience with repeated acts of disobedience. The Spirit of God seemed for a time as if He had given me up, till I left the place I now had lived at upwards of five years, and removed to another village called Newton-under-Ousbury, where was a small society of sincere Christians, with monthly preaching, a public meeting, and a class on the Lord's day. Here the Lord began to strive with me again; but I fought against Him, and still grieved His Holy Spirit.

I removed from thence to Stockton-upon-Tees. Upon my arrival here I began to reflect upon my folly; conscience was awakened once more, and I obeyed its dictates so far as to join the society. But seeing my class-leader intoxicated with liquor, I was offended, and went near him no more.

After spending near one year in this place, I removed to Whitby in the year 1768, where was a large and flourishing society. I felt very unsettled and unhappy, till at last I resolved, God being my helper, to join that loving people. But then I thought I was too vile, and was greatly discouraged by reflecting on my repeated backslidings for upwards of four years. I doubted whether I should ever stand long. However, my convictions increased, so that I could take no rest day or night, till I sent

for that pious man, William Ripley. I expected that he would upbraid me with my past ingratitude to God, and His people ; but he said not a word of this kind. No ! he saw me labouring under the weight of a wounded spirit, and the comfort he administered to me at that time was a cordial to my soul. Without asking me any questions, he fell upon his knees to write a note admitting me into the society, which I received with a trembling hand, fearing that my poor unfaithful heart would again start aside as a broken bow. But, glory be to God, He was better to me than all my fears. In five days He blessed me with what I never knew before ; namely, a clear sense of pardon. This was on February 6th, 1769, about ten o'clock in the evening. I believe that I might have received this years before, when under those first awakenings of the Spirit of God, had I fallen into the same hands ; but the people I was first connected with, though very serious and devout, were less evangelical in their sentiments. I had still retained a notion that my repentance was not sufficient ; that I must be much more in earnest, feel more terror, more sorrow, deeper convictions, &c., before I could possibly attain a sense of pardon. This my friends in Whitby soon discerned, and told me, if God saw it necessary, He would deepen my convictions ; but for me to pray for this, and to wait a little and a little longer, before I would dare to look for His favour, was the ready way to lose even the distress I then felt. They therefore told me that I must pray for nothing but a sense of the favour of God. Two of them one night vehemently urged me to embrace the promises by faith ; assured me that all things were ready ; and insisted that I must, that very night, believe on the Lord



Jesus Christ, and I should certainly be saved. At first I thought them so wild in their notions, and withal so unreasonable in their demands, that I could scarcely refrain from being angry. My carnal nature spurned at it, because I thought it as impossible for me to believe, as to pull the sun from the firmament. However, when they had talked to me thus for nearly two hours, I was exceedingly affected; and, trembling between hope and fear, I begged, in a degree of agony, that they would pray for me. Accordingly, we all fell on our knees. That zealous man of God, John Rogers, prayed first; and at every word he uttered my heart felt, and I firmly believed that God would grant him his heart's desire. In that solemn moment, all the sufferings of Christ came to my mind. By the eye of faith I had as real a view of His agony on Calvary as ever I had of any object by the eye of sense. I saw His hands and His feet nailed to the cross; His head crowned with thorns; and His side pierced with the soldier's spear; with innumerable drops of blood falling from different parts of His body, and His face all covered therewith. But O, what a look was that! Such an inexpressible degree of approbation was communicated to my soul thereby, as I shall never forget. While I now recollect it, my overflowing heart and eyes almost forbid my proceeding. In that moment my burden was gone; my heart was brought out of bondage into glorious liberty; and the love which I felt for God and all mankind was inexpressibly great. I was constrained to cry, with David, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul." I seemed as if I had never known happiness till now, and could hardly think it possible that I should learn war any more.

"I rode on the sky,  
Freely justified I,  
Nor envied Elijah his seat ;  
My soul mounted higher,  
In a chariot of fire,  
And the moon it was under my feet."

I now went about among my old acquaintance, with a confidence that they would all repent and be converted if they knew how ready Christ was to save them. Some I found willing to hear what I had to say; others stared at me as one quite out of my senses. However, as nothing discouraged me, if I found them unwilling to let me pray with them, I used to fall on my knees in the midst of the floor, and praise God for what He had done for me, and pray that He would let them see their wants, and give them all to experience the same blessing which I enjoyed. It pleased God to work powerfully at that time, especially among the young people; many of whom came from a considerable distance to hear the word. I and some others had great delight in accompanying them on their way home. Nor can I reflect on those seasons without singular pleasure, when we sang the praises of God as we walked along, and when we kneeled down in the fields, or on the sea-shore, and commended each other to the grace of God. This was in the twentieth year of my age.

About this time the Lord raised up several witnesses of entire sanctification, whose daily walk and conversation did honour to their profession. With some of these I often conversed, and they would frequently speak of the blessedness of this salvation from inbred sin. I did not fully understand them at first, but thought I was as happy as I could be; nor

did I know that I wanted anything which I had not received. However, not many days after this, being closely tempted, I was convinced that, though the guilt of sin was all done away, yet there were in me the remains of an evil nature; that, though I was happy in a sense of acceptance, and had power also over inward and outward sin, yet the fountain of corruption was not dried up; that I had yet a degree of the carnal mind, which is enmity against God. And had I not been told that this is consistent with a state of justification, it is probable I should have cast away my confidence, as the enemy strongly suggested that my experience was all a delusion. The attack was severe while it lasted, for I reasoned with the temptation till my soul was in an agony; but in my distress I cried unto the Lord, and He graciously heard me, and delivered me out of all my fears; so that my evidence of pardon was more distinct and clear than ever. And as I believed the report, and cordially received the testimony of the happy few who professed entire sanctification, I felt strong desires awakened in my soul for that inestimable blessing; and being daily urged by some of these to press after it, and to expect it every moment by faith alone, in a little time my thirst was such, that I could not rest, whatever place or company I was in.

“ My vehement soul cried out oppress’d,  
Impatient to be freed;  
Nor could I, no, nor would I rest,  
Till I was free indeed.”

In reading the Scriptures I was more and more enlightened to see, and encouraged to hope for, deliverance from the root of sin. I saw there were given unto me exceeding great and precious pro-

mises, that I should be made a partaker of the Divine nature ; and that the great end for which our Lord was manifested in the flesh, was “to destroy the works of the devil, to make an end of sin, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.” And I farther perceived, that not only the promise of God, but His oath also, was given of old to His covenant people, “that they should be delivered out of the hands of their enemies, that they might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of their life.”

From the manner in which this subject is introduced in the New Testament, I was led to infer two things. First, that the enemies there meant were our sins, especially the evils of our own heart. And, secondly, that the design of God is not to defer the destruction of these till death, or even to some little time before it, but that “now is the accepted time ;” for He here declares, His will is, that we should serve Him all the remaining part of our life in holiness, and without fear ; which St. John, in his first Epistle, iv. 18, says we cannot do until we are made first perfect in love.

Indeed, the whole Bible seemed calculated to raise my expectation of an answer to that prayer : “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.” And the more I contrasted the spirituality of the law with my own corrupt nature, the more eager were my desires.

At last I resolved neither to eat nor sleep till my desire was accomplished. I had no sooner made that resolution than I was tempted to reason upon the rashness of it. But such was the condescension of God, that He indulged my importunity, and granted my request. I went with a trembling heart to the

very house where it had pleased Him to shed abroad His pardoning love in my soul. That pious family no sooner learned my errand than they encouraged me to expect the blessing that hour; and exhorted me to believe on the Lord Jesus for full salvation. We then fell on our knees; and a good woman, one Mary Best, full of faith and love, wrestled and pleaded with the Lord for me. In less than fifteen minutes my burden was removed, and I felt an entire change, accompanied with a peculiar humbling sweetness; but not that rapturous joy I always thought attended that perfect liberty. On this account I was tempted much to reason; and, it is probable, the enemy would have wrested away my shield, but for the comforting interposition of my friends, who were not, like me, ignorant of Satan's devices. They told me it was a common case that a soul might be emptied of sin, and yet not filled with love till afterwards; that the blessing of Christian perfection consisted in feeling I am nothing, and Christ is all in all. This I found true by experience, and therefore I was enabled henceforth to rejoice in a full assurance of this great salvation. In this glorious liberty I walked for, at least, three months; during which time, notwithstanding many fiery darts were shot at me, I could sing,—

“Not a cloud doth arise,  
To darken the skies,  
Or hide for a moment my Lord from my eyes.”

When I looked for those inward risings of anger, pride, and self-will, which, like dry tinder, were formerly ready to catch fire at any provocation, I found them not; but, on the contrary, I found meekness, humility, and resignation. I was so truly

humbled with a sense of my own nothingness, that I rejoiced to suffer reproach for the name of Christ. That natural enmity to the pure law of God being now totally removed, His commandments became more joyous than ever; and I could say, in a sense that I never could before, "The law of God is in my heart, even the law of love." I felt it the constraining principle, which led me to do and suffer the whole will of God. But, at the same time, I felt my ignorance and helplessness, together with the weakness and unworthiness which attended my best services: hence my daily cry was,

"Every moment, Lord, I want  
The merit of Thy death."

And, blessed be God! I felt it applied. Through faith in His blood I had constant access to the Father, through the Spirit; yea, and had fellowship with the Father and the Son by the Holy Ghost.

My love to God was accompanied with fervent desires for the salvation of immortal souls, and a conviction that I was called of God to preach the Gospel. I thought if I could explain to others what I then felt, they would all repent and be converted. I was at this time at a considerable distance from my relations; and, as my first care was for their salvation, I could not rest till I reached my native place, being fully persuaded that I had a message from God unto them. I got a considerable number of my friends together; and, standing up for the first time in my father's house, faithfully warned them to flee from the wrath to come. All seemed astonished, and some were much affected. But, alas! it was not as I expected. I did not find it such an easy matter to convert them from the error

of their way as I imagined. I plainly saw this power belongeth unto God alone. However, it pleased Him to give me some encouragement. For, the second time I met them, while at the last prayer, the house was filled with groans and cries, till at length one exclaimed, (namely, my sister-in-law,) "Glory be to God! Glory be to God! He hath blessed me! He hath set my soul at liberty! I can praise Him, and I will praise Him! O, praise God for me! Praise Him! Praise Him! Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord!" And so she went on for a considerable time.

This greatly encouraged me. But Satan seemed very unwilling that I should proceed, and therefore endeavoured to throw hindrances in my way. I then removed from the family I had been so much blessed with, to another, who, though they had much longer professed religion, yet were less alive to God. Here I fell into a snare, which brought my soul into great heaviness; for, parleying with temptation, I lost my confidence, and became almost distracted for a season.

About this time I had the following dream. I thought I was bitten by a large serpent; that I received a wound which I knew to be very dangerous; and that unavoidable death would ensue, if a speedy cure could not be effected. But where to go for it, I knew not. My hand was presently swelled to a prodigious size, and the poison seemed to spread very swiftly through my whole body. Observing this, I was in an agony of distress, when one told me of a physician at some distance, who alone could cure the bite of that serpent. On this, I determined to go to him immediately; but when I got to the door, I saw an innumerable multitude of serpents,



through the midst of which I must pass. My torture and perplexity being inexpressible, I turned into the house again. But reflecting that if I stayed here, death was the certain consequence, and that I could but die, if I went; and, considering farther, that if the physician could cure the first wound, he could also cure the rest; I resolved to push through them at all hazards, and so ran with all my might. I thought I got many bites more; yet none so bad as the first. At last, coming to the physician, he received me with kindness, and applied a balmy medicine, which immediately relieved my pain, and removed the inflammation. Yet still my distress was great, and I told him, "I dare not return back again; for the numerous serpents I have just passed through will again assault and wound me." But he bade me be of good courage, and anointed my whole body with the same balmy medicine, and said it would hinder them from wounding me, though they might assault me; but if they should wound me, he bade me return to him again. On this I thanked him, and with a grateful heart took my leave. When I came towards the serpents, I saw them with joy and surprise sunk back into holes in the earth, and only their heads peeping out, except a few who assaulted me, but had no power to hurt me. So I got safe to my mother's house.

By this dream I was persuaded that I ought to leave that family, and therefore resolved to do it without delay. I had no sooner fixed this determination, than a glimpse of hope was darted into my soul, and I saw that Jesus was the Physician. Believing that He was both able and willing to heal my wound, I retired (as was my daily custom at that hour) to read and pray; when the Lord, instead of

upbraiding me, applied the precious balm of His blood, and restored the joy of His salvation to my distressed soul. Taking my Bible, and lifting up my heart to heaven, I opened on the seventh chapter of St. John; and coming to that passage, "Jesus stood up in that great day of the feast, and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink," I shall never forget the manner in which these words were applied to my soul. It was as if the Lord Jesus Christ was standing before me in person, and actually speaking these words to me. If He had, it was not possible my assurance could have been greater, that all my backslidings were healed.

" Stung by the scorpion sin,  
My poor expiring soul  
The balmy sound drank in,  
And was at once made whole :  
I saw my Lord upon the tree,  
And felt again He died for me."

I now left Whitby, and went to reside about five miles distant. Here Providence cast my lot with a most agreeable and happy family, and the Lord confirmed what He had wrought. The holy flame was such in my heart, that I went to the neighbouring villages, and, especially every Lord's day, stood in the open streets to warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come. I met with some discouragements, especially from old dry professors, who concluded I ran too fast to run long; but in less than six months it pleased God to raise a society in Lythe, a village about a mile distant. We procured a comfortable place to preach in, and the Lord added daily to our number. We then solicited the travelling preachers to visit us, and soon after they gave us one night in a month.

The enemy had often strove to prevent the Gospel from taking root in that wicked place; but now, seeing the word mightily prevail, notwithstanding all his stratagems, he raged with redoubled fury. Some ruffians combined to prevent my preaching; and were determined, some way or other, to carry their point. As I was not afraid of man, and the few whom God had raised up were resolved to stand by me, we regarded not their threats.

After they had often disturbed us in our preaching-house, one night these sons of Belial collected all their forces, and assembled at the door to attack us as we came out. Their number was great, and I had no sooner dismissed the people, than they began the assault. Hearing this, I pushed forward from the pulpit, and got into the midst of them. They saluted me with volleys of oaths, and showers of stones and dirt, and in less than two minutes fell to blows. One of the stoutest of them advanced, with eyes full of fury, and made several strokes at my head; but I received them upon my left arm, which, by this means, was much bruised. When he could not bring me to the ground, he was enraged; and, watching his opportunity, whilst I endeavoured to rescue one of my friends whom they were beating, he came behind, and gave me such a blow on my right temple, that I staggered like a drunken man. My hat fell off, and my senses were greatly confused; so that I must have fallen, had he followed his blow. This doubtless he would have done; but in that moment a young girl, who had lately been awakened and had joined our society, thinking I was much hurt, instantly took up a stone, about two pounds weight, and threw it at his back. He then left me,

to revenge himself upon her ; and indeed she suffered dreadfully : for he took up a stone, equally large, and threw it with such violence in her face, that she fell to the ground, and lay motionless. She was supposed to be dead, and was carried home to her mother's house. However, it pleased God that she recovered ; yet she was cut in the most dreadful manner, having her cheek laid open to the bone ; and she will bear this mark of suffering for her Lord's sake to her dying hour. Others of our friends were hurt. One, in particular, had his face almost covered with blood ; and his coat, waistcoat, and shirt torn half-way down his back. It is probable we might have come worse off still, had not God taken our part ; for, "as the stars in their courses fought against Sisera," so the Lord struck our enemies with terror, by sending, in that very moment, dreadful flashes of lightning from a cloud, which seemed to burst over their guilty heads. Finding an opportunity, while they were terrified, we endeavoured to escape ; but retreated gradually, as some of our people were old and infirm, and we were not willing to leave them in the rear, lest they should become a prey. The next day we found means to bring some of the ringleaders to justice, and they disturbed us no more.

Having spent almost two years among these my first children in the Gospel, though I loved them as my own soul, I was not easy in my mind to be shut up in one place, and that a small one. I therefore set out on foot upon a journey of about one hundred miles in circumference, preaching wherever I found a door open.

In this journey I met with some difficulties : nevertheless, my encouragements more than counter-

balanced them. Among several others, one thing was as pleasing as remarkable. An old man came to hear preaching at Wingate, a small village near Sunderland; and was deeply convinced of sin. He went home with trembling and terror, and could not sleep till he had found a clear sense of pardon. Being filled with joy unspeakable, he communicated this to his wife, with whom he had lived upwards of fifty years. She was exceedingly affected with the relation of what God had wrought in him; and wished to go the next evening with him, and hear for herself. When she came and heard, she was deeply convinced; and returning home, she asked her husband if he thought God would give her the same blessing which he had obtained. The old man, full of faith, cried, "O, yes! all things are ready. You may have it this night: He hath saved me, who am the greatest sinner." Being encouraged at this, they agreed to pray together alternately, confident that God would bless her also, even that very night. They continued wrestling, Jacob-like, till after four in the morning, and had no answer. Though their strength was much exhausted with praying so long, being both upwards of fourscore years of age, and consequently very infirm; yet they would not give up; and the Lord soon after condescended to grant her request, and to speak her sins forgiven. What a fulfilment of that promise, "If two of you shall agree on earth touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them!" And what encouragement for poor sinners of every age, that these two, even at the eleventh hour, were not rejected by the Lord of the harvest!

This journey being in the depth of winter, the weather severe, and some of my lodgings not very

comfortable, was the cause of a long and dangerous illness, the relics of which settled in my left hand, which gathered and broke in several places. The whole habit of my body was brought so low, that I was thought by most who saw me to be in a deep consumption; indeed I fully expected that I should not recover, and was greatly rejoiced at the prospect of being so soon with Him whom my soul loved. Nevertheless, for His sake I was willing to live, if thereby I might bring glory to His name.

I continued in this weak state of body for upwards of two years. Yet I laboured as much as my health would permit for some months on the Hull Circuit. In the year 1772, one of the preachers appointed for York going to America, Mr. Wesley wrote to me to take his place; which I did. And I continued on that Circuit until my strength was so exhausted that I could travel no longer. I was then advised by Mr. Bruce, a medical gentleman in York, to use the cold bath. And in preference to all others he recommended Ilkley Wells, a place near Otley, in the West Riding of Yorkshire. Before I had been there a week, I felt the good effects of it; and I am fully persuaded that, under God, that water was the means of saving my life. After using it constantly for about three months, in October, 1773, I went to Thirsk, and at the request of many kind friends spent my winter there; where I employed the little strength God had graciously restored to me, and, I trust, not without some fruit of my labour.

In May, 1774, although I had no relapse in my disorder, it was thought advisable that I should return to Ilkley Wells for a while to confirm my cure. I did so, and continued in that neighbourhood till August. I now thought myself able to take a

Circuit again, and therefore at the Bristol Conference that year I was appointed to labour with Mr. Duncan Wright, at Thirsk. I was truly thankful for such a fellow-labourer; for he acted the part of a father to me. We had the hearts of the people, and the Lord added many seals to our ministry.

In the year 1775 I was received into full connexion, and appointed at the Leeds Conference for Edinburgh; where I had for my colleagues T. R. and R. W., two faithful men, whose hearts were in the work. The people soliciting our stay another year, Mr. R. and I were permitted to remain; and Mr. M'N. was appointed with us. But though we laboured in love and harmony both with each other and among the people, yet very little fruit appeared at the end of two years. We had found two hundred and sixty members in the Edinburgh Circuit; we joined upwards of two hundred more, and yet, in the end, left only two hundred and forty-five; that is, fifteen less than we found. So fluctuating was that people! Nevertheless we have a few steady, faithful, hospitable friends in Scotland.

I should probably have stayed longer in that kingdom, had my health permitted. What injured my constitution a second time was, a journey which I took to the Isle of Bute. It is eighteen miles long, and in most parts about three or four broad; situate about forty miles from Glasgow; its inhabitants in general speak the Erse language; few understand English. Being invited by one of the natives, a well-wisher to religion, I was resolved to give them a trial. We had about twenty miles to go by water; and in the second voyage I made, just after we put to sea, a dreadful storm arose. The boatmen were so foolhardy as not to put back again; and, the



wind being nearly right a-head of our vessel, they were obliged to tack most of the way. The women passengers and the children began to shriek and cry dreadfully, so that the sailors were obliged to put them all below, and to fasten down the hatches. The place was small, and the people so numerous, that I expected they would be suffocated; but there was no alternative. The rest drank so much whisky, that I feared there would not be men enough sober to work the vessel. They pressed me to partake with them; but I could not taste. No; I had other work; looking every moment when the vessel would fill, and upset, as part of it was an open boat. The rain and hail were very heavy from the clouds; and the sea also breaking over us, I had nothing left dry about me. Thus I sat, or stood, without any shelter, for twelve or fourteen hours, exposed to the whole, whilst the water ran out of my shoes. But, contrary to our fears, it pleased God at last to bring us safe to the haven where we would be.

Having no clothes to shift me, I went straight to the inn where I had slept before; intending to go immediately to bed, as my only resource, to prevent a fit of sickness; but, to my great disappointment, a gentleman's family, who had been detained by the same storm, had possession of my lodgings. In about two hours, an old man, hearing of my situation, came and gave me a kind invitation to his little cottage. I gladly accepted his friendly offer; and hastening home with him, put off my wet clothes; but my bed being raised only about twelve inches from a damp earthen floor, and there being no fire, it was not quite so comfortable as my condition then required, especially as the coverings were not warm, being nearly worn out. The consequence was, in a

few hours I found my throat exceedingly inflamed, and a burning feverish heat through my whole frame; so that I had little hope of ever seeing the main land again. It was also impracticable to send for any of my friends, because of the weather: yet, blessed be God, I was not friendless; for that Friend that sticketh closer than a brother did not leave me, neither forsake me. He who filleth the vast immensity of space with His presence can never be distant from those who hope in His mercy; nor can He fail to deliver them in the time of need. I have reason to speak thus; for such was His goodness, that without any human assistance, use of medicine, or any comforting cordial, (save that of the love of Christ,) in a few days I was able to go out again. But I was then hard put to it for food; and, having nothing that I could relish, I employed a poor woman to gather me a kind of shell-fish, about half the size of cockles, which was my chief support till I was able to return to the main land. After this I remained some months in Glasgow and Edinburgh; but did not recover my health for a long time.

In the year 1777 I was appointed to labour in the east of Cornwall. A journey of about five hundred miles was no small fatigue in my then weak state of body; but the Lord was with me. I looked upon it as His doing; therefore set out in His name, and found sweet communion with Him in the way.

I had long desired to converse with that great and good man, Mr. Fletcher; and now an opportunity offered itself. Stopping at Bristol for a few days to rest myself and horse, I heard of his being at Mr. Ireland's, about three miles off, in a poor state of health, and with two of my brethren took a ride to see him. When we came there he was returning

from a ride, which he was advised by his physician to take every day. Dismounting from his horse, he came towards us with arms spread open, and eyes lifted up to heaven. His apostolic appearance, with the whole of his deportment, amazingly affected us.

The first words he spoke, while yet standing in the stable by his horse, were a part of the sixteenth chapter of St. John, most of which he repeated. And whilst he pointed out the descent of the Holy Ghost, as the great promise of the Father, and the privilege of all New-Testament believers, in a manner I never had heard before, my soul was dissolved into tenderness, and became even as melting wax before the fire.

As an invidious report had been spread that he had recanted what he had lately written against Calvinism, in those excellent writings of his, entitled his "Checks," &c., I took the liberty to mention the report, and asked him what he thought had given rise to it. He replied, he could not tell, except that he had refrained from speaking on controverted points since he came to Mr. Ireland's; partly by reason of the poor state of his health, and because he did not wish to grieve his kind friend, by making his house a field of controversy; but assured us he had never yet seen cause to repent of what he had written in defence of the Rev. Mr. Wesley's Minutes. And though he believed his close application was the means of reducing his body to the state in which we then saw it, yet if he fell a victim, it was in a good cause.

After a little farther conversation upon the universal love of God in Christ Jesus, we were about to take our leave, when Mr. Ireland sent his footman into the yard with a bottle of red wine, and some

slices of bread upon a waiter. We all uncovered our heads while Mr. Fletcher craved a blessing upon the same; which he had no sooner done, than he handed first the bread to each, and then, lifting up his eyes to heaven, pronounced those words: "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life." Afterwards, handing the wine, he repeated in like manner: "The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ," &c. But such a sacrament I never had before. A sense of the Divine presence rested upon us all; and we were melted into floods of tears. His worthy friend, Mr. Ireland, grieved to see him exhaust his little strength by so much speaking, took him by the arm, and almost forced him into the house; while he kept looking wishfully, and speaking to us, as long as we could see him. We then mounted our horses, and rode away. That very hour more than repaid me for my whole journey from Edinburgh to Cornwall.

When I came to Plymouth-Dock I found a lively and loving society. My heart clave to them. My fellow-labourers and I had a very agreeable year together upon that Circuit, and some good was done. My health also was much restored.

In 1778 I was appointed to labour in Kent. It was the first year of the grand encampment upon Cox-Heath; which consisted of about fifteen thousand men. Being only at the distance of half a mile from the Heath, for two or three weeks before I entered upon my Circuit, I generally preached in the camp once a day. I have reason to believe some of the seed then sown was not lost, having since met with persons both in England and Ireland who testified they had cause to thank God for the few opportunities they then enjoyed. How often is that word

fulfilled, "Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days!"

On December 4th I was married to Miss Martha Knowlden, a young woman of a worthy family in Loose, near Maidstone, with whom, by a wonderful chain of providences, I became acquainted about three years before at Edinburgh. She was brought up a Dissenter, and feared the Lord from her infancy; and was often comforted and sweetly drawn by the love of God, into a patient waiting for Christ. But she never had a clear sense of pardon till some time after she joined the Methodist society. About four years after she found peace with God, and near one year after our marriage, she became more acquainted with the deep things of God than before: inbred sin was removed by sanctifying grace, and the perfect love of God was shed abroad in her heart. Her great modesty and diffidence would not let her say much; but all her words, works, and tempers showed what great things the Lord had done for her soul. One striking part of her conduct among many others I would mention here, recommending it to the imitation of all, especially to those of her own sex. When anything of a trying nature happened in the society, while others would have been talking over and repeating grievances, her method always was, to retire immediately for secret prayer, where she usually left her burden with the Lord. She was of few words; no tatler, no busy-body, but a keeper at home. She carefully refrained from speaking evil of anyone; but when any had used her unkindly, or caused pain to her mind, she bore it in silence, and recommended them to God in prayer. She would never dispute with anyone. While she lived, her whole deportment was an unspeakable blessing to

me. And in her death she gave testimony of God's power to save to the uttermost them that come to Him through Christ Jesus.

In the year 1779 I was appointed to labour at Leeds, where I found a people ripe for the doctrine of holiness; and many that year believed unto full salvation. This was the richest soil for Methodism I had yet known. We found two thousand two hundred members in society, and about twenty local preachers, who greatly assisted us in the work; and the word of the Lord ran and was glorified; to which the harmony which subsisted between the preachers, stewards, leaders, and people, greatly contributed.

In the year 1780 I went to Sheffield, where I found a large society, but less united than those I had left; and therefore I was not so comfortable for a time as I could wish. It grieved me also that one of my fellow-labourers did not lovingly draw in the same yoke, and soon after left the Connexion. The uneasiness occasioned in the society by his disaffection, for some months threatened us with disagreeable consequences; and our enemies expected a considerable division among us: but "He that sitteth above the water-floods" found means to prevent it. So that, instead of losing in our number, we found at the end of the year an increase of ninety-seven members.

In the latter end of June, Mr. Wesley, according to his usual tour, came to Sheffield, where Mr. Bradford, who then travelled with him, was taken very ill, and was obliged to desist. I took his place for about six weeks; but I soon found my constitution was inadequate to the task. Being much fatigued with riding in the heat, which was very intense at that time, I was seized with a bilious complaint the

first day the Conference began at Leeds. Doctor Hamilton, with other physicians, paid every attention to my case, which appeared very doubtful for some days. The chief means whereby I found relief were bleeding and the warm bath, but it was some time before I was pronounced out of danger. I here learned some useful lessons while under my Father's rod; He gave me peace and resignation when my pain was most extreme, and during my whole confinement I do not know that I had one murmuring thought. After my recovery, I felt a degree of gratitude which I had not known before; and a resolution fixed in my heart, to be more devoted to God and zealous for the good of souls than ever.

I was appointed to labour another year in Sheffield, and was highly favoured with the assistance of two good young men. We laboured together in harmony; had peace in all our borders, and the work of God greatly prospered. Many souls were awakened and born of God, and one hundred and forty were added to the society.

In the year 1782 I was appointed for Macclesfield. As the Circuit was large and unwieldy, four preachers were sent, with instructions to divide it. We did this in the best manner we could; and my worthy colleague, Mr. Myles, took charge of the Burslem division. But this, with some other amendments, such as furnishing the preachers' dwelling-house by subscription, changing the stewards, &c., gave deep offence to a few individuals; but the hearts of the people were united to their preachers; and notwithstanding all the difficulties we met with, we were greatly comforted among them, and at the end of two years I had the satisfaction of leaving them considerably increased in number; and I trust, upon



the whole, not less alive to God than I found them.

But all the trials I had ever known were small when compared with that which I was here called to bear. After a lingering sickness of about two months' continuance, the Lord saw it right to tear from my bleeding heart the dear partner of my cares and sorrows, my ever faithful and affectionate wife.

As it so nearly concerns myself, and will probably be a blessing to some into whose hands these pages may fall, I shall make no apology for inserting a part of what passed during her last sickness.

It was on new-year's day that her danger began first to appear. After the renewal of the covenant, it was deeply impressed upon my mind, that her sickness would be unto death. Being greatly distressed on her account, I went to her, and told her my fears for her. She replied, with her usual sweetness, "Perhaps my life may not be in danger. You can remember the time when I was reduced much lower than I am now, and yet the Lord restored me. He bringeth down to the grave, and raiseth up again. The Lord can do great things. Nay, He hath done great things. Fear not, and all shall be well."

January 7th.—She still continued to grow weaker. Besides many other things which passed in conversation concerning her past life, and the dealings of God with her soul, she said to me, "What pleasure should it afford us, my dear, that we can look back on the five years we have lived together, and say, We have been helps and not hindrances to each other in the ways of God! And what cause have you, as well as I, to be happy in the reflection, that we have never had one jarring string since we knew each

other ; that, notwithstanding we have had many trials from others, yet we have never been the least cause of sorrow to each other ! And if the Lord should take me now, you will follow me, but not yet. No, my dear, you have more to do and to suffer ; but He who has hitherto supported will still be your Helper. You will live to be more useful and more happy than ever. The Lord knows you are upright before Him, so that you have nothing to fear. He will lay underneath you His everlasting arms : therefore go on, and let nothing discourage you. I believe the Lord will prosper what you take in hand, and that He will bless the children, and make them His children. You may be discouraged to think how you shall do with them when I am gone ; but you need not. The Lord will raise you up friends where you do not expect, and you shall want for nothing ; and, what is best of all, I shall meet you in glory."

In the evening she desired the children, Joseph and Benjamin, might be brought to her bed-side. She kissed them both, and prayed that the blessing of Jacob's God might ever attend them ; and then added, " I believe God will bless you, and make you a blessing to many. I believe He will make you good men, and you will one day follow me to heaven."

14th.—A part of the morning she was scarcely able to speak at all ; but her mind seemed quite composed, and a heavenly sweetness was in her countenance. I prayed with her, and afterwards, being seated by her, she burst suddenly into tears. On being asked the cause, she said, " O, it is happiness that makes we weep. I am thinking of Jesus, and how His name charms all the heavenly host ; and the thought is almost overcoming. O, He is a precious

Saviour! I have many relations in heaven, who are near and dear unto me; a father, a mother, and sisters, and brothers, and others whom I loved tenderly; but they are all nothing when I think of Jesus; and I shall soon see Him, and praise Him better than I can now. Angels will be blessed companions above: but O, they are nothing; I can only think of Jesus. My sweet Saviour, I do love Thee! Where is that hymn that speaks of Jesus as the subject of all the angels' songs?" The hymn was read, though with many tears, while she seemed to "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

On the same day Mr. Joseph Roe called to see her, and, being desired to walk up stairs into her room, she said to him, "The Lord favours me, Mr. Roe, in a peculiar manner. I have no pain; and, after all my unworthiness, He gives me sweetly to rejoice in His love, on a sick and dying bed. His condescension is so great, that, at times, a sense of it almost overpowers me. He is a precious Saviour, indeed He is; and those that cleave to Him with a sincere heart will ever find Him so. He knows I am sincere, though very undeserving; and all I have ever feared, or that has harassed my mind, has been a concern lest others should think me more than I am. I would not deceive anyone by professing more than I possess; the Lord knoweth. No; it would be an awful thing to do that. I would be sincere. It is good to be sincere. We shall all find it so when we come to a death-bed. I could wish we might all live to God more than we have ever done. What is the world, or anything in it? Jesus is all; and I shall praise Him for ever, I know I shall." While she spoke these words, she seemed to be in an ecstasy of joy and praise. Her sparkling eyes and outspread

arms made her to appear as if she were even now about to take her flight to her immortal home.

In the evening she called upon us to sing,

“He comes, He comes, the Judge severe;”

and she sung the whole hymn with us so loud, that all were amazed, and much affected.

18th.—She had a violent fit of coughing, and nature seemed in agonies. I said to her, “My dear, this is hard work.” She turned her languid face towards me, and said with a heavenly smile upon her countenance, “No, my dear, it is not. No, no, it is not hard. Jesus makes it sweet. He suffered much more for me. I should be ungrateful if I thought it hard, or if I had a murmuring thought. I am sensible it is the Lord’s goodness to me, and am thankful for it. My mind is composed, and I am sure all will be well.”

19th.—This was a happy day to her. While I stood by the bedside, she looked at me, and said, “The Lord will bless you, my dear. He will bless you. What cause have I to be thankful for the day I first knew you! But for you I might have been cast into the way of a gay world; but the Lord made you the instrument of snatching me from it. I hope I shall be one diamond more in your crown, and shall praise God to all eternity for you. Go on, my dear, and the Lord will be with you.”

23d.—George Pearson called to inquire after her, and by her desire he was asked up stairs. She gave him her hand, and said, “Well, well, George, I am glad to see you. I love to see the Lord’s children, and I believe you are one. You have known the ways of God a long time. The Lord has done much for you. Yes, He has blessed you, and He will bless

you still. He is a good and faithful God. I have ever proved Him so, and especially in this time of need. He does bless me, and comfort me, and will save me to the end. I believe you have had many trials since you first set out in the ways of God. You now draw near the end of your journey. You will not forsake the Lord now, and I am sure He will not forsake you. No, no; the Lord forsakes not His people. You see He does not forsake me, unworthy as I am." He prayed with her, and her mind was much encouraged.

Some time after this, she called the maid to her, and said, "Phœbe, be sure you be a good girl. Serve the Lord: give Him your heart. Religion is the best thing, Phœbe. Nothing else will do. Be truly religious, and then you will be fit to live, and fit to die. O, it is a blessed thing to be devoted to God in our youth. Do not forget what I say. I am dying. You may live many years, or you may follow me soon: we cannot tell. The Lord knoweth. O, think on these things; do; and then you will see me again in heaven."

24th.—Being asked how she felt, she replied, "Very comfortable. I feel the Lord is good to me. And, notwithstanding all my unworthiness, I believe He will accept me: nay, He does accept me. I know that Jesus is mine, and I am His! I am indebted to His merit for all: I am saved through Christ alone. I leave my every concern with Him; and I am sure He will keep that which I have committed to His care. My husband, my children, my friends, my every care I leave with Jesus. I fully believe He will preserve them all, and we shall meet above."

26th.—Being spent with coughing, when she had

recovered a little, she said, "Well, but I know my reward is with the Lord, and my God will be my help. And, glory be to His blessed name! I feel He doth help me. My trust is in the Lord; He is near unto me at all times." And again, after a severe fit of sickness, and a sleepless night, she turned her face to Miss Roe, and said, "Well, my dear, I think the Lord will not tarry long now. O, He is a gracious Saviour. We shall soon meet where we shall rejoice together for ever.

‘How shall we sing and triumph there,  
Our dangers and escapes compare,  
Our days of flesh and woe!’

Yes, we shall, we shall."

She continued in a rapture of joy, as one just ready to take the wing, while Miss Roe repeated the following lines:—

"He looks from the skies,  
He shows us the prize,  
And gives us a sign  
That we shall o'ercome by the mercy Divine," &c.

For several days she was exceedingly weak, and could scarcely be heard to speak. At times, however, she whispered, "O, my precious, precious Lord, Thou wilt not tarry long! I shall soon be with Thee. What a day will that be! I shall praise Thee for ever. O, what a sweetness, what happiness I feel! I am quite resigned; entirely so. All that the Lord does is well done indeed! I am glad it is just as it is; all is right. Come, Lord Jesus! O, come quickly! O, come, my gracious Jesus! do come and help me! Thou wilt come soon. I shall soon be with Thee."

February 15th.—A little before three o'clock this

morning, she had a severe fit of coughing, and tried to get up the phlegm in vain. I said to her, "You have had a hard struggle, my dear ; but this also is permitted by Him who loves you tenderly. Yes, you are dear to Him. God has some good end to answer in thus lengthening out your affliction. But your Lord is now saying, 'It is enough !' Only have faith and patience a few minutes longer, so shall you be perfect and entire, lacking nothing. You are this moment suffering all that you ever shall suffer to all eternity. You shall never, never, never suffer again ! Methinks I hear Jesus now saying, 'Lo ! I come quickly to wipe away all tears for ever from your eyes. It is done. Thou shalt sorrow no more, neither shalt thou feel any more pain !' "

She replied, "These are precious words. They comfort me ; and I believe it is all true, and I shall prove it so. Yes, I shall ! I shall ! I shall !" After that she lay composed about a quarter of an hour, silently breathing prayer and praise to God. Then the cough came on again, and a most severe struggle ensued, which threw her into the agonies of death. She was convulsed all over in a moment. While the agony was at the height, it was thought she was delirious. Just as it seized her, she cried, "Pray ! pray ! pray ! O, pray for me." We did so. The agony abated a little, and her reason returned. She instantly cried out with an uncommon vehemency, clasping her hands, "My God ! my God ! My Saviour ! My King !" repeating it many times. I replied, "Yes, my dearest creature, your Saviour is coming to you ; He is here. Jesus is now standing by, and His holy angels with Him. They are all waiting for you. See ! see ! their wings are already spread out to bear you away." She cried out with



an uncommonly loud voice, "I know it! I know it well!" repeating the same words at least ten times over. She was then silent a little. When I could speak, I repeated to her those lines of Mr. Pope:—

"Hark, they whisper! angels say,  
'Sister spirit, come away!'"

telling her these her favourite verses were now completely fulfilled in her; that she was now in effect saying,—

"Cease, fond nature, cease thy strife,  
And let me languish into life."

I was going on to the end of the verse; but just as I repeated,

"Heaven opens on my eyes!"

she stopped me short by crying out so loud as to be heard down stairs, and through every room in the house, "See! see! see! What a fine man! See! see! see! What a fine man!" The scene was very affecting. In that dread moment such a solemn awe fell upon all those about her, as if the Lord Jesus Christ was visibly present. From the uncommon vehemence and unshaken confidence with which she had just before used the prayer of her dying Lord, "My God! my God!" we had not a doubt, but as she was then drinking of the cup of sorrow, after the example of her Lord, (for she was bathed all over in a cold sweat,) so in like manner was an angel sent, or Jesus Himself appeared, to strengthen her in her last agony.

She continued with her eyes fixed, repeating the same words, "See! see! see! What a fine man!" for fifteen or twenty minutes, without intermission,

till her strength was quite exhausted. Then, with a lower voice, she cried, "Come, come, come! Saviour, Saviour! come, come, come!" And gently leaning back, she sweetly sunk into His arms, at half-past five o'clock on Sunday morning, February 15th: having just seen her birth-day, and ended her twenty-ninth year in a world of sorrow, she began with her Lord in paradise that Sabbath which shall have no end. My youngest son, a lovely child, died at the same time, aged eight months; and they were both laid in one grave.

I was now left with my two little boys, one four, the other only two, years old. But the Lord was merciful both to them and me, who in the course of His providence raised us up a kind friend in Miss Roe, the only daughter of the late Rev. James Roe, of Macclesfield, an intimate acquaintance, and twin soul of their dear mother; and for whom both they and I have had cause to be thankful ever since.

As I clearly perceived the Lord had prepared in her another help-meet for me, and one every way calculated to assist me both in my soul and labours, I therefore entered into the marriage state a second time on August 19th, 1784. And now that eight years are nearly elapsed, I have found no cause to alter my judgment, but, on the contrary, have often blessed God for such a yoke-fellow. And it has pleased the Lord to make her useful in her present calling to many, especially those of her own sex. She was in some measure prepared for this, not only by a pious and liberal education from her childhood, but by an early conversion to God. She was deeply awakened, and brought to the saving knowledge of Christ at the age of seventeen; and a short time after that felt the need of a farther work of grace.

For this she earnestly entreated the Lord, who soon came to her help.

“ He spoke the second time, ‘ Be clean,’  
And took away her inbred sin.”

From that time, (now eighteen years ago,) though variously tempted and tried in common with others, she has held fast her confidence in God. And from the time I first had the happiness of becoming acquainted with her, I have seen nothing in her conduct inconsistent with her profession. The evenness of her temper, and the cheerfulness of her disposition, as well as her faith and prayers, have greatly contributed to my comfort, when closely exercised and tried from different quarters. She was certainly the especial gift of God to me. And I have not the shadow of a doubt but we shall, after a few more conflicts here, follow her who is gone before, and all spend a glorious eternity together in recounting the wonders of Providence and of grace.

Immediately after our marriage, we hastened to my appointment in Dublin, where we safely arrived, in a Liverpool packet, after an agreeable passage of thirty hours.

I had not been many days in that city before I saw some fruit of my labour, and was fully satisfied that my going there was of the Lord. A few years ago there had been a sifting time in the society. But the troublers of Israel were now removed, and we found the people fully prepared to receive the Gospel of peace. Within the space of six weeks several found mercy, and returned public thanks to Almighty God for a sense of His pardoning love; and many more were deeply awakened.

This we received as a token for good, and the

hopes of all were encouraged to expect a more glorious outpouring of the Spirit. For this a general spirit of supplication was given, and the Lord answered for Himself in a wonderful and glorious manner. At the quarterly lovefeast, Sunday, October 10th, (the first we kept together,) soon after the people began to speak their experience, a poor woman under deep conviction cried aloud for all present to pray for her. We all instantly fell upon our knees, and entreated the Lord on her behalf. In that moment the power of God descended in such a manner, that I believe not one unaffected soul remained under the roof. We continued wrestling in prayer for nearly half-an-hour, and afterwards found not less than seven souls were clearly justified; and many who had received notes of admission on that occasion were deeply awakened, and immediately joined the society. The next evening another was justified under the word, and two more under the last prayer, when also a poor backslider felt that the Lord had healed him. Within the next week following, five others were brought into Gospel liberty; and in the month ensuing, thirteen more. At a lovefeast held in our Gravel-walk chapel, November 18th, eight persons received a sense of pardon, two backsliders were restored, and a stranger, who had got admittance for that time, was truly awakened. About a fortnight after this, we had our band-lovefeast, when two more were justified, and three professed to be at the same time renewed in love. In the beginning of December, one was justified at St. Patrick's church when receiving the sacrament; and one who had been educated a Roman Catholic, but was awakened about six weeks before, received a sense of pardon under the word in our preaching-house; as

did two more, who were convinced of sin at one of the above-mentioned lovefeasts.

On Christmas-day our chapel at Whitefriars was well filled at four o'clock in the morning. We continued in preaching, exhortation, and prayer, till eight. It was a memorable season, and the power of God was manifest in the whole congregation. I cannot ascertain the exact number of souls that were converted to God, but several found a clear sense of His pardoning love shed abroad in their hearts; and many others were awakened, who had remained until that time entire strangers both to God and His people.

The first Sunday in the new year all the society, with several other friends, assembled together to renew their covenant with God. It was a most solemn season. I seldom remember to have felt more of the Divine presence at any time. The language of my heart, and I believe of most present, was, "How awful is this place! Surely it is the house of God: this is the gate of heaven." So it was found to be: three penitents, and two backsliders, were at that blessed ordinance reconciled to God by faith in the blood of Christ. And on the Thursday and Friday evenings following, while the form of the covenant was farther explained, four more received forgiveness of sins; and two others under the preaching, on the ensuing Sabbath.

From that time to the 25th of March, thirty-six more received a sense of pardoning mercy. On Good-Friday two more were justified under the word, and one at the communion in St. Patrick's. On Easter-day many could witness, "Christ is risen indeed." Two received a sense of pardon in the morning, and in the evening four more felt the

power of Him who bruised the head of the serpent, while attending to a sermon delivered from Genesis iii. 15; and, beside these, three others were blessed with a degree of inward liberty they had not known before. We had reason to hope our honoured father, Mr. Wesley, would have spent his Easter with us, but being detained in England longer than he expected, he did not arrive in Dublin until April 11th; before which time three more were pardoned; two backsliders were restored; and two others experienced the great truth, "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." Mr. Wesley spent about a fortnight in the city; during which time eight persons were justified under his preaching; and before he returned from visiting the country societies, fifteen souls found peace with God.

In the time of our Conference, two others received a sense of pardon, and three more were enabled to believe to full salvation. The whole number of souls brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, in the course of the year past, was a hundred and thirty; and an increase in the society of two hundred members, after excluding all those whom we judged improper to remain.

When I found my fellow-labourer was to be removed, I made it matter of much prayer to God, that He would send me another suitable in every respect. The Lord fulfilled my desire, and gave me Christopher Peacock; a man every way adapted to the work, who was also my son in the Gospel of Christ, and for whom I had a most tender affection. He was a laborious, zealous young man, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and his ministry was attended with abundant success. But it pleased Him who seeth not as man seeth, and "whose judg-

ments are a great deep," early to deprive us of this valuable man of God! A putrid fever was commissioned to snatch him away (perhaps from some evil to come) in the midst of his usefulness, and the full vigour of youth. He finished his course February 15th, 1786, in the thirty-fourth year of his age.

The affliction and death of one I loved so much, with what I felt for the people in losing such a helper, so greatly affected my bodily health, that, for some weeks, I thought I must have sunk under the burden. Application was made to Mr. Wesley to fill up the vacancy, but in vain, as all the preachers were engaged. This was an awful period; and I greatly feared the glorious revival, which we were now in the very midst of, would at least be impeded. But the death of a preacher so much beloved had a good effect upon the people: we cried to the Lord, and He was better to us than all our fears; and, great as my fatigue was, my health grew better; so did the Lord perfect His strength in human weakness. I was led to consider this was the Lord's work, and that He could carry it on with or without means, or by what instruments He chose. The congregations continued very large, and the prayer-meetings and classes exceedingly lively; and scarcely a week passed in which some were not awakened and joined to the society; and frequently under the word, or at other ordinances, three, four, or five would be found to praise God for His converting grace. And, although they were amazingly happy in the love of Christ, yet there was scarcely any appearance of what is commonly called wildfire; and the work was not only gradual, but deep in most of them who were the subjects of it. The number of persons whom we had reason to believe were savingly



brought to the knowledge of God among us, in the course of the second year, was one hundred and seventy-eight souls, which is forty-eight more than in the former year; and the society amounted to more than nine hundred members.

Having had so considerable an increase, and for so long a time together, it was natural to expect, according to the common course of things, the tide would now begin to ebb. But He who is able to do above all that we can ask or think still continued to awaken sinners in great numbers. Zion's cords were lengthened, and her converts flowed in from every quarter. Several concurring circumstances induced Mr. Wesley to comply with the request of the society in leaving me amongst them another year; and I was favoured with a fellow-labourer of piety, integrity, and good abilities; nor did the Lord give us less fruit than before. When we came to deliver up our charge at the yearly Conference, after thoroughly weeding the classes, and lopping off one hundred and twenty-six members, some for immorality, and others for omitting to meet their class, yet the society had increased to eleven hundred and thirty-six; which made in all an addition of above six hundred souls in three years; and, from the best accounts we could keep, we had every reason to believe, four hundred and fifty-eight of these were savingly converted to God.

In the year 1787 I was stationed for Cork. But before I could enter upon my new appointment, some temporal matters rendered it necessary that I and my wife should first go to Macclesfield. The journey appeared more pleasing, as we were honoured with the company of Mr. Wesley, Dr. Coke, and others of our preachers and their wives, across the

Channel. But although the passage in general was agreeable, yet it was attended with some danger. When we had gone about half way from Dublin to Parkgate, the packet, borne down by a rapid tide from the Welsh coast, suddenly struck upon a rock, where we lay beating vehemently for about an hour. The captain ordered all the women and children upon deck, to try if we could save their lives, expecting every minute the ship would go to pieces. But through the kind providence of God, and after fervent prayer to Him for deliverance, it pleased the Lord to interpose in our behalf, so that we got clear again, though not without some damage to the vessel. However, the pump was sufficient to keep it up, till we reached the port.

Having settled our affairs, we hastened back to Dublin, and from thence to Cork, where, after a journey of nearly seven hundred miles, to and fro, by sea and land, we were gladly received by an affectionate people, who were studious to make our lives comfortable. Some unhappy jarrings the preceding year had considerably injured the work of God; so that in visiting the classes, I found, about three weeks after I arrived, the society reduced from five hundred, to three hundred and ninety-seven members. My fellow-labourer was a pious man and a good preacher; and we had the happiness to see peace and prosperity return. We added a hundred to the society before new-year's day; and have reason to believe upwards of sixty of these were converted to God.

But the progress of the work did not stop here; the Lord continued to prosper His word to the salvation of many souls in that city. And it is probable more good would have been done, but for a few

troublesome spirits, who, under a pretence of standing up for the Church, hurt the minds of many. The Lord greatly blessed His word among the soldiers. Eight sergeants and about forty privates met constantly in class, and some of them became eminent for piety. Notwithstanding every difficulty cast in the way, the society increased to six hundred and sixty; many of whom were much alive to God, and ornaments to their profession when we left them.

About this time one of our travelling preachers, a pious good man, related to me the following instance of the Divine interposition; namely:—A few months ago, as he was travelling on his Circuit, he was met by three robbers; one seized the horse by the bridle, a second clapped a pistol to his breast, and a third caught hold of him to pull him from his horse, all swearing they would instantly have his money or his life. He looked them steadfastly in the face, saying, “Friends, did you pray this morning?” They seemed greatly confounded. But one of them instantly took his watch out of his pocket. Another took off his saddle-bags, and pulled out a knife to rip them open; but he cried, “Stop, friend! there is nothing there but a few religious books, and you are very welcome to have them to read if you please; and as to money, I have only twopence halfpenny,” which he took out of his pocket immediately, and gave to one of them.—“Now,” says he, “shall I give you my coat? You are welcome to anything I have about me: only, I would have you to remember, I am a servant of God, and am now going on His errand. I am going to preach at such a place, and I beg you will let me pray with you before we part; and it may do you more good than anything I have

given to you." At this one of them said to the rest, "We will keep nothing belonging to this man : if we do, vengeance will pursue us." He took the money and returned it with his own hands into his pocket, and insisted that the other should return the watch ; which, after a little hesitation, he put back also : and the third taking up the bags laid them on the horse, and fastened them to the saddle again. He thanked them all for their great civility ; and again renewing his request that they would let him pray with them, he fell upon his knees on the road, and prayed with great power. Two of them went off, but the third kneeled close by him all the time, and was very much affected ; so that there was reason to hope he was resolved to become a new man.

In the year 1790 I was appointed for London. Here I found a numerous, pious, and loving people, who have been accustomed to the Methodist discipline from the beginning, and who, in general, pay attention to our rules, for conscience' sake. We have an extensive field of action in this great metropolis, and plenty of work for more than three times the number of itinerant preachers that have ever yet been employed on this Circuit. When my coming was first proposed to me, I felt exceedingly the importance of such a charge, and should have objected to the appointment, only I was afraid of running counter to the order of God. But I did not foresee the solemn scene which lay before me, or my timidity would probably have prevailed. I had much comfort, both in my labours and family connexions, for nearly seven months. But it is impossible to describe what I felt on the removal of our venerable father to paradise : yet I esteem it the greatest honour ever done me, that I was providentially called

to accompany him in his last journey, and be with him in his latest moments.

Added to this irreparable loss, many other disagreeable circumstances, arising from the general stir occasioned through our whole Connexion by this awful event, made the situation of my brethren and me here very distressing. God alone knoweth how my own mind was exercised from the time of Mr. Wesley's death till the Conference. But when I came to Manchester, and saw what manner of spirit the preachers in general were of, how brotherly love prevailed among them, and that all were resolved to go on in the good old way, the snare of the enemy was entirely broken. I therefore returned to my charge with joy, fully resolved to act in harmony with my brethren, and, by the help of God, to live and die an itinerant Methodist preacher.

It is matter of praise that the great Head of the church is still with us, in a powerful manner. Many are the souls that have been convinced and brought to God amongst us, in and near this city, in the space of eighteen months last past. The congregations are large and attentive; and the societies are increased to upward of three thousand members; which is more by some hundreds than they ever were before. But Satan has not been wanting to stir up a spirit of discord in some: nevertheless, the Lord has graciously overruled it hitherto; so that the people in general are in peace, and the word of the Lord continues to run and is glorified. But to return to my own experience.

I observed in the former part of this account that my justification was particularly clear; so was also the work of sanctification; and as I received the former of these by faith alone, so did I the latter. But

I did not retain the witness of full salvation long. Nevertheless, the Lord has graciously restored it to me at different times; and yet as often have I proved unfaithful, and by giving way to unbelief, have been robbed of my confidence, as it related to that grace. I bless God, I now feel a measure of the genuine fruits of holiness; yet I am clear I have not so much of these as many of the adult children of God do possess. I feel myself utterly unworthy of the least of the mercies of my Lord; but my trust is in His righteousness. I feel a need of recurring daily to the blood of sprinkling, and am persuaded that the Lord will correct and pardon what He sees amiss.

It is now twenty-nine years since I was first convinced of sin; and a little more than twenty-three since I tasted of the pardoning love of God: from which time, (excepting once for a space of about two months,) I have been enabled, through grace, to look up to God as my reconciled Father in Christ Jesus. About twenty-two of those years I have been endeavouring in some small measure to recommend the same blessing to others; and I praise the Lord who hath given me some reason to believe I did not run before I was sent. Yet I have much cause to be ashamed before God, that I have not been more holy and more useful. However, one thing I can say,—the same principle I set out with continues until this day. It was the “love of Christ” which then “constrained me.” And the language of my soul now is,

“My life, my blood I here present,  
 If for Thy cause they may be spent;  
 Thy faithful witness will I be,  
 ’Tis fix’d, I can do all through Thee.”

Before I left home to preach the Gospel, I thought

an itinerant life was calculated, above all others, to promote a growth in grace, as it cuts off all pecuniary advantages and secular concerns. I still believe God is able to uphold His messengers, and cause His grace to abound towards them. But, upon the whole, few are more critically circumstanced, all things considered, than a Methodist preacher: especially those who are called to superintend in our Connexion. It is a mercy, indeed, if while these are looking to their Lord's vineyard, they do not neglect their own. I often fear this has been too much my own case; and have heartily wished I had less to do with public affairs in the church of God, and that I might spend the whole of my time in recommending the love of Christ to perishing sinners. But one thing I firmly believe,—whatever the Lord calls to, He will qualify for; and that He never calls them who love Him to anything which will necessarily make them love Him less; and therefore, if I have suffered loss in my own soul, I take all the blame to myself. It is certain, every minister of Christ requires, not only much wisdom and prudence, but also peculiar resolution and firmness of mind. He that would faithfully serve Christ and His cause among us, must not seek the favour of men. Nevertheless, “the servant of the Lord should not strive; but be gentle unto all men; apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves. For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.” It might have been more consistent with my own peace, had I paid more strict attention to this rule in some cases.

I have often brought heaviness upon my mind, by reproving, with too much warmth, what I believed wrong at the time; and perhaps I have incurred the



displeasure of some, more than needful ; who, for want of candour, have retained prejudice to their own hurt. But I trust, in future, the Lord will fortify my mind with patience, and give me more of that love which “ beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things.”

My soul at present doth hunger and thirst after a more entire conformity to the image of God. I see nothing so desirable as holiness ; and I am resolved, through grace, to recommend it to all, both by example and precept ; and I pray God His kingdom may descend with power. I trust the time is near, when the Lord shall appear to “ make an end of sin in me,—in all,—and bring in everlasting righteousness ; and that the whole earth shall soon be filled with His glory. He who hath promised it saith, “ Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

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For three years after the conclusion of this narrative Mr. Rogers continued his itinerant labours ; and then he was compelled to desist.

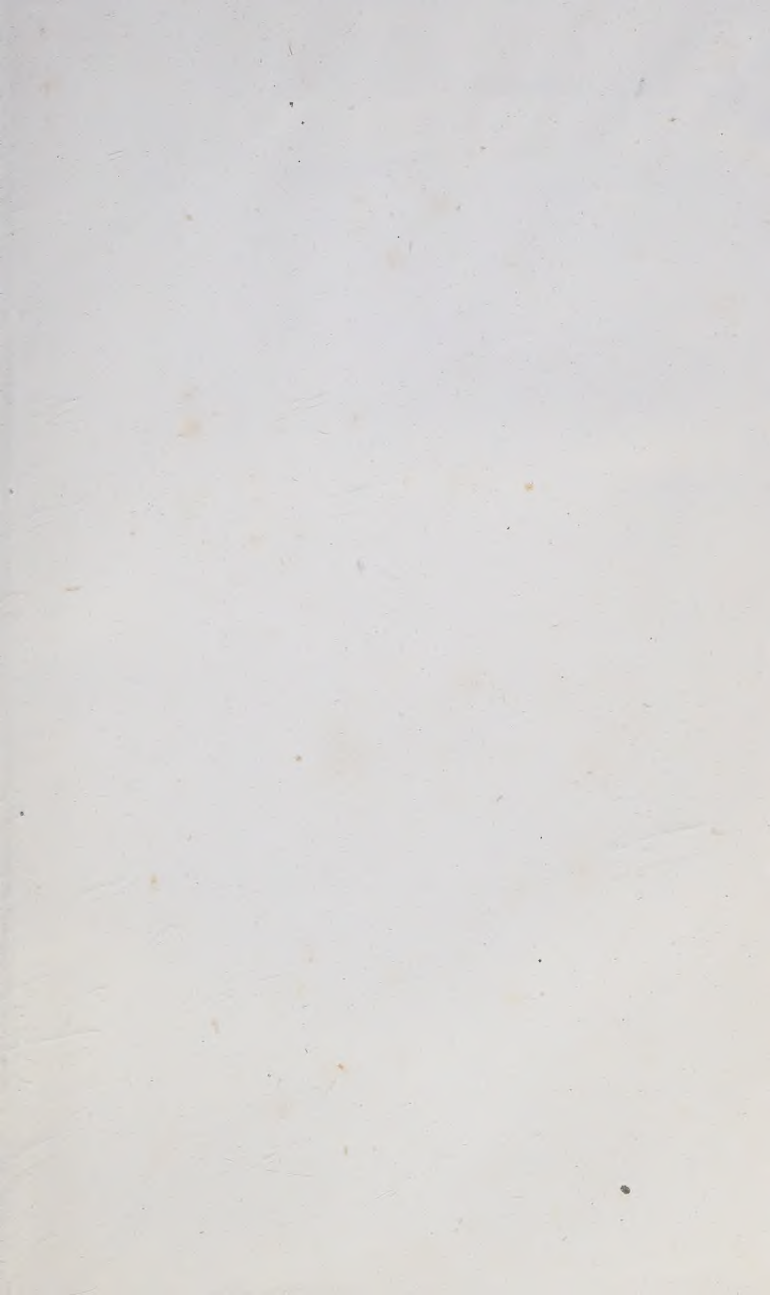
In the Minutes of Conference for the year 1807, it is said concerning him : “ He possessed a strong and vigorous understanding ; and being called at an early age to the ministry of the word, he laboured with considerable success to acquire that knowledge without which zeal, even in a good cause, too frequently goes astray. His sermons were generally rendered impressive and useful, by sound doctrine scripturally and zealously enforced. His latter days were spent in a way consistent with the tenor of his

active life. Being compelled, by multiplied infirmities and afflictions, to retire from the arduous duties of itinerancy, after having travelled thirty-two years, he settled in Guisborough, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, within five miles of the place of his nativity. Here he usually preached twice a week, till he was called to the bosom of his God. An inflammation on his lungs terminated, in ten days from its commencement, his earthly existence. He contemplated the approach of death with that calmness and resignation which characterize the genuine saint: and when his afflicted wife observed to him, seeing him struggling for breath, ‘This is hard work, my dear;’ he replied, as he could get utterance, ‘Good work, good work, once for all!’ Thus prepared, his spirit took its flight to paradise, on January 28th, 1807. It is worthy of remark, that until the time of his last illness, he rose every morning at six o’clock, even through the winter, and in his very debilitated state, and devoted an hour to the perusal of the holy Scriptures.”

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